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JOHN BULL

Begins inside

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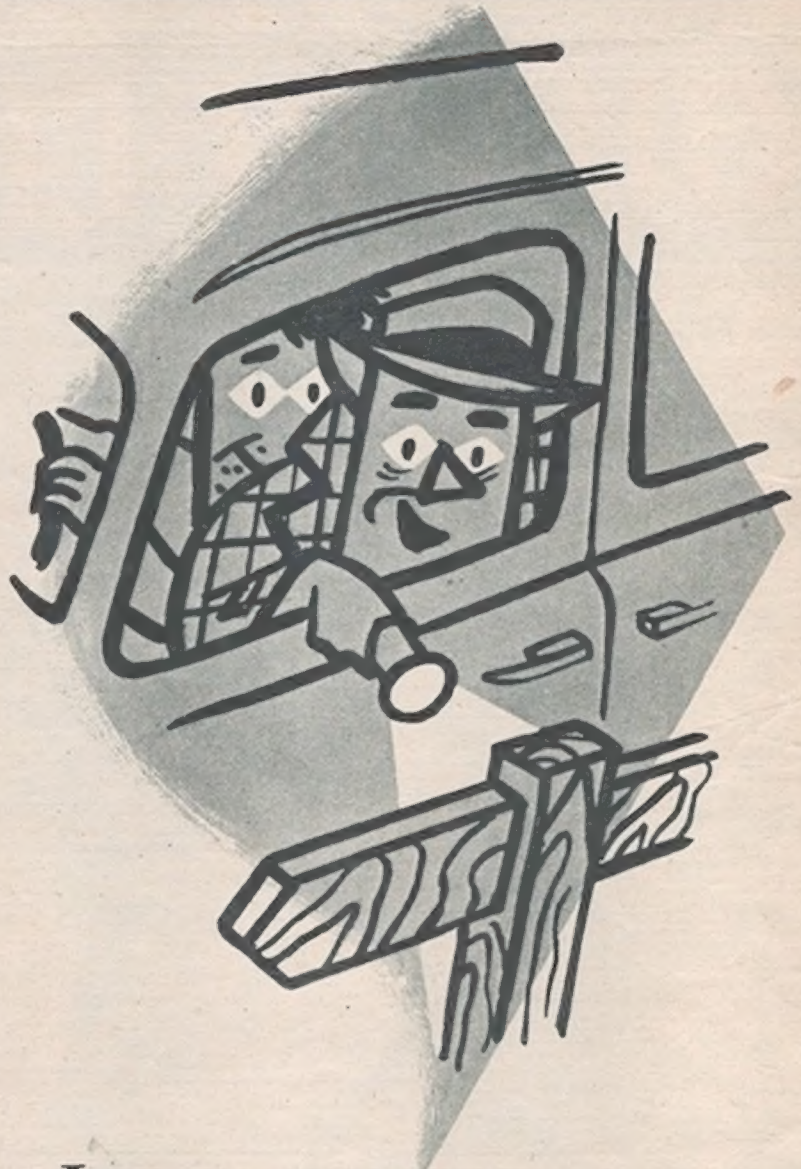

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EDITORIAL

Holiday barrier

A HOLIDAY record is expected this year. A million visitors will come to Britain from overseas, and 1,200,000 Britons will go abroad. This will happen in spite of what the tourist trade calls "the British travel barrier"—of passports, visas, Customs and currency restrictions.

With the exception of the Communist lands Britain is now probably the most tiresome European country to get in and out of.

Ten years have passed since the war, and eight since Ernest Bevin said, "I want to be able to go to Victoria Station, get a railway ticket, and go where the hell I like without a passport or anything else."

YET in 1955 Sir Arthur Morse, new chairman of the British Travel and Holidays Association, declares: "As head of the national tourist organization I am sorry to say that Britain appears to be lagging behind many European countries in easing frontier formalities.

SIR ARTHUR MORSE
"We are lagging behind"

"Now that we have nearly a million visitors from overseas in a year, the present strict formalities cause increasing delays and inconveniences."

But the Foreign Office, the Home Office and the Treasury show no sign of relaxing their bureaucratic grip on holiday-makers.

Cross-Channel passengers are condemned to humiliating delays and questioning. Even day-trippers must have passports now, though no such formality was considered necessary before the war.

Are these obstructions to journeys really necessary?

Some other countries do not think so. Citizens of Belgium, Holland and Luxembourg travel freely in all three countries without passports. So do those of the three Scandinavian countries, Denmark, Norway and Sweden.

In France, Italy and Switzerland, where passports are still required, inspection is far less rigid and irritating than it is in Britain. So are Customs examinations.

CURRENCY restrictions are dwindling elsewhere. But, although there have been some relaxations here, the holidaying Briton may still carry only £5 in sterling cash, and must declare his total of other currencies.

There is no sense in much of this inflexible officialdom. A false passport can still slip through. To prevent currency smuggling would mean searching every traveller to the skin. And the concession of a duty-free half-bottle of brandy to a tourist who has been abroad for twenty-four hours, but not to one who has been abroad for twenty-three, is simply stupid.

There is still time, before this year's holiday season begins, to simplify and ease these frontier regulations which give Britain a bad name at every port.

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"Hands up kittens! Who wants more? Kit-E-Kat's what we adore!"

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AREN'T GARDENERS LUCKY!

says Bob Green, our gardening expert

"Nothing to do all the winter!" . . . People often say this to me, bless 'em—they must think we gardeners hibernate like insect pests! There's fruit-tree spraying, for a start. I've done mine, but February's not too late if the buds haven't started to burst. I use one part Jeyes' to nine parts water—nothing better! Another job you *mustn't* miss is sterilizing tomato beds and potting soil. Saturate the soil with one tablespoonful of Jeyes' per gallon of water, and leave a fortnight before sowing or planting. Disinfect pots and boxes too, or they may re-infect the soil. It's these very jobs—killing insect pests and plant diseases, that will provide clean, healthy growing conditions for your plants later on. Nothing to do! Well, well.

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FREE SPEECH

A patient hits out at doctors

WHY do doctors still have an exaggerated idea of their own importance? Is it because of their early training in hospital, where nurses treat them with awed respect and create an atmosphere of veneration in which only an exceptionally strong-minded young man can retain his sense of proportion?

Is it because, in their work, doctors meet only those who are too unwell to laugh at pomposity or counter rudeness with spirit? Or is their attitude merely a part of the mystique of their profession—like the writing of prescriptions in almost indecipherable dog-Latin to baffle the patient?

Yesterday morning my doctor spent ten minutes sitting on my bed and complaining how overworked he was. When I told him he should organize his day properly, like any other well-paid business man, he replied that he was not a business man. "Medicine is a vocation,' he told me reprovingly.

"In that case," I replied, "you shouldn't grumble about your work."

He went off in a huff.—D. McM., Edinburgh.

Home Brewed

THE landlord of a small inn at Helston, Cornwall, was more than usually interested in my reaction to his beer. It was certainly a fine brew, and the landlord, Joe Richards, told me why.

Mr. Richards and his son operate one of the very few inn-breweries left in the country. Using eighteenth-century methods they make their own

The landlord mixes his brew

beer in the brew-house attached to their four-hundred year old inn. It takes a week to brew a hundred gallons. First, malt and water are steeped in a mash tun, and the extract is boiled. Yeast is added, and four days later the brew is ready to drink. —H. M., STAFFORD.

Fifty years ago there were four thousand brewers in the country; now there are four hundred—mostly commercial breweries using Mr. Richards's methods on a larger scale.

All Mod. Con.

BAD plumbing, dealt with in your editorial (JOHN BULL, January 22), has been the subject of a good deal of research by my local authority, Carlisle City Council.

One result has been that many council houses have been stripped of lead cold water pipes and fitted with plastic tubing which is more resilient. —P. BELL, Kendal Street, Carlisle.

Carlisle City Council carried out tests with plastic piping and found that it withstood frost far more readily than lead or copper. It has been used with success by other councils, and farmers have found it valuable for outside plumbing. The plastic used is called polythene.

Right Track

MR. F. D. MORGAN, who suggests that British Railways' passengers should be warned when they are nearing their destinations ("Free Speech," January 8), would find that Canadian railways have overcome the difficulties.

When I was in Canada and boarded a train at Montreal, the guard took my ticket and gave me a small numbered tag to pin up above my seat. Five minutes before the train reached my destination he came to warn me that the next stop was mine.—M. W., Belfast.

Canadian National Railways say this is the general practice in Canada, and the guard keeps a record of passengers' destinations on day and night journeys. It aids passengers, and also allows the guard to check when and where seats will be vacant.

Making Certain

IN Yugoslavia nearly every hotel invites departing guests to write either compliments or complaints about the service in one of the two guest books kept by the reception clerk.

After a stay in one of Belgrade's largest hotels, I decided to make some comments.

"Which book do you want, madame?" I was asked. "The one for compliments," I said—and with a florid bow it was handed to me. "What would have happened if I had wanted the complaint-book?" I asked.

"Madame," replied the reception clerk unflinchingly, "I would have told you that the complaint book is locked in the safe, and nobody in the hotel can find the key."—MRS. C. HOFLER, Hendon.

Blackballed

AMONG the customs attached to marriage ("Free Speech," January 8), is one called "feet-washing" which is carried on in Scotland.

In fact, the name is misleading; it should be "feet-blackening." A day or so before his wedding, the bridegroom has his feet liberally coated with boot polish by his workmates.

Often, the bride is similarly treated, and where the custom is thoroughly performed, she is afterwards taken home on a hurley while her escort rings a bell.—J. KEITH, Huntly, Aberdeenshire.

A hurley—or hurley-hacket—is a springless cart.

Parting Shot

MY parents recently showed a tendency to talk about the division of their household goods after their death. My two sisters and I tried to stop this talk, which seemed morbid and quite unnecessary, but without any success.

One Saturday afternoon, when we were all gathered for tea, my mother pointed to the china tea service and said to me: "I want you to have this after we've gone." I seized the chance to tell her that though we didn't want to discuss the subject, we would rather settle the matter once and for all. "I'd like the little writing desk," I said, glancing round the room.

"And I'd like the bookcase and the chest of drawers," said my elder sister, entering into the spirit of the thing.

"But I wanted the chest of

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

Whatever the pleasure ...

Player's Please

[NCC 882]
5

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ORIGINAL

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WINE

IN NELSON'S TIME...
Stone's Ginger Wine was being enjoyed for the cheerful glow of well-being it brings.

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To real ginger add real wine, as Stone's do, and you have a drink to cheer you at all times.

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FREE SPEECH

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

drawers," said my younger sister. "It would look just right in my hall." And the two girls began an argument which soon became acrimonious.

My parents began to laugh, and then my father intervened. "Now you can see for yourselves why we wanted this business settled before we're dead," he said. "We don't want a family feud when it's too late for us to mend it."

He got out a sheet of notepaper, and before we left we had divided everything in the house—without any further quarrels.—B. G. B., Hull.

Tokyo's A Stage

ON my way home from Korea last year I spent a few weeks in Tokyo during early spring. At that time of the year, the Japanese think any opportunity for a celebration is better than none.

Some of the events are hardy annuals—like "Green Tree Week" when trees are planted, and "Flower

Viewing Time" when whole families search public parks for the first blossoms—and some are invented on the spur of the moment to give everyone in the locality a little fun.—C. B. H., Rotherham.

The photograph shows children trying to get a place on a processional float—one that would give them a chance to make a noise. A big drum is beaten by the youngsters to drive away evil spirits.

Invisible Ink

RUSSELL SCOTT'S verdict in the case of Hugo, whose will was invalid because one of the witnesses was blind (JOHN BULL, January 15), could only have been given in an English court.

We are told that Hugo *wrote* his will; therefore it was a holograph—a document written wholly by the person in whose name it appears.

If Hugo had been a domiciled Scot his will would, under Scottish law, have required no witnesses in these circumstances—and it would have been valid even if they had *both* been blind.—JACK BLACK, Tweedsmuir Road, Glasgow.

Russell Scott says that, in Scottish law, a holograph will is valid if it can be proved to have been written by the testator. This might be difficult if both witnesses were blind. The main point of the case was the requirements to be fulfilled by a witness to a document—and, in general, these are the same in England and Scotland.

Glorious Devon

THERE is no need to go to Germany to find a building like Wipperfurth Ratskeller, which is both town hall and inn ("Free Speech," January 8).

The Ilfracombe Hotel, on the front at Ilfracombe, Devon, houses council offices, and the Holiday Inn, which has bars, a café and a ballroom.

It seems that many British families go abroad when their own country's holiday centres can provide similar attractions.—H. BARNETT, Ilfracombe.

High Level Protest

ALL sorts of labour-saving devices are incorporated in household equipment these days, but why is it all made to suit the average or tall female?

Cookers, for instance, are nearly always at a height which makes saucepan-lifting a positive danger to pocket-sized women—such as myself.

Kitchen cabinets have marvellous labour-saving improvements these days, but I have to stand on a chair to reach the top cupboards. Would it not be possible to make cupboards in two sizes—one being shorter and wider than current models?

Clothing manufacturers are, at last, catering for small women. Makers of household equipment and furniture should follow their lead.—MRS. F. M. CLARKE, Fordham, Ely, Cambs.

Clinical Clues

AS a practising hospital pharmacist, I think it desirable that poisonous tablets and capsules should be distinguishable from one another ("Free Speech," January 1).

When patients who have taken harmful drugs are admitted to hospital, the doctors are greatly helped in identifying the poison if tablets are marked in some way. Then appropriate remedial measures can be applied without delay.—A. J. TAWN, M.P.S., Bournemouth.

As You Like It

WHEN I went to school forty years ago I was made to study Shakespeare soon after I learned to read.

This has meant that for me Shakespeare has always had a flavour of the schoolroom, and I react with an instinctive dislike.

My son is now fourteen, and to him Shakespeare is still only a name. Yet when he went with a school party

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

THIS WEEK'S COVER

BEFORE marriage it's the girl who is helpless. That is how she gets her man, says Gerald Fancett, who at thirty-one is still a bachelor. But after marriage the man is the helpless partner—and he usually takes good care to remain helpless. Incidentally, it's the casein that makes milk boil over, even if kept under the closest observation. It acts like soap in water—it froths as the result of the lowering of surface tension between the milk and the air. Still, the irate wife with a stove to clean won't be pacified with science. Tomorrow night, realizing that no man can be trusted, she'll make the nightcap herself — which is just what her husband wanted.

"My children love it..."

"My CHILDREN always love it when their father comes home—he's so good and patient with them. Before their bedtime I always give them a cup of Rowntree's Cocoa, as I have found this is the perfect way to get children to take hot milk. Rowntree's has such an individual flavour, too, so I always keep a tin of it in the house."

ROWNTREE'S COCOA

Sore, ticklish throat?

"No fear!" *says* Harry Secombe

Crazy comic, impressionist, first-rate tenor — that's Harry Secombe. And what counts most in all his acts is his voice. How does he protect it? With MAC Throat Sweets.

HARRY SECOMBE, like many stars, keeps his throat free from infection with MAC Throat Sweets. He takes them at the first warning signs. Or daily, as a wise and pleasant safeguard.

If you suffer from a sore throat, cough or catarrh, get a packet of these potent, palatable sweets. Get MAC Throat Sweets. They are so safe that children, too, can take them freely.

The medical reasons why MACs work

MACs kill dangerous, infectious germs because they contain Amyl-Meta-Cresol, a powerful germicide many times as strong as pure Phenol (R.W. Co-efficient 250).

MACs lubricate the throat and freshen the mouth because they contain camphor, pure sugar and tincture of Tolu.

MACs help to reduce swelling and irritation of the passages where catarrh lurks, because they contain Menthol : you inhale it as the sweet dissolves.

Don't have a throat — have a MAC

MAC BRAND *ANTISEPTIC* THROAT SWEETS
1/6 A PACKET

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Mum! where's the Germolene?

FOR WANT OF GERMOLENE SKIN MISHAPS CAN EASILY GO WRONG . . . .

Read how the mother of a boy like this learned by experience. She writes:

"*. . . My little boy fell and cut his knee and for weeks I tried to heal it and spent shillings on different ointments until I tried yours (Germolene). After a week my son's leg was healed . . .*"

(Signed) Mrs. D.T., Cheshire.

It is known that skin heals more quickly when protected from germs, dirt and water. Germolene contains no water. Its pure medicinal oils sink through the pores and greatly hasten healing. Keep a tin handy

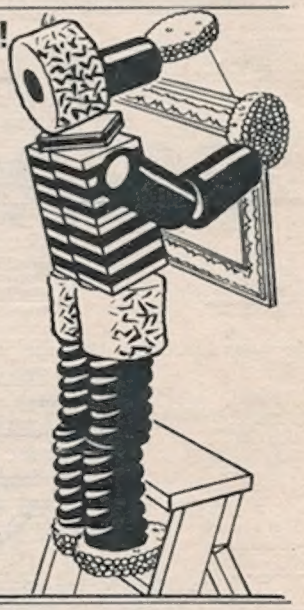
The healing ointment—
STIMULATES NATURAL HEALING PROCESSES

Bertie's GRAND about the house!

The sweetest friend of the family

Bassett's ALLSORTS

The **QUALITY** *line!*



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A head waiter not only enjoyed Keystone himself, but recommended it to clients of his hotel as a good sound wine.

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THE POWER TO STOP PAIN

'ANADIN'—the power to stop pain.
At all Chemists 1/9d. and 3/6d.

FREE SPEECH

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

to see *Macbeth*, he came back full of enthusiasm.

"It's a first-rate thriller," was his verdict. "Banquo's ghost really had me scared."

To me, who had always regarded *Macbeth* as hard work, this was a revelation.

Surely this is the way to encourage children to study the classics. They should have the chance to discover them for themselves before school has had an opportunity to cause resentment.—P. BURTON, Amersham.

Sky Scraper

WITH fires burning daily for five months I had to call the sweep last week. He arrived with a glorified vacuum cleaner, spent a quiet half-hour in the house and was as unobtrusive as the baker. How different from the last time I was visited by the chimney sweep, when I lived in Germany.

He arrived on the roof of my Munich home by jumping nimbly

A Munich sweep on his rounds

via chimneys farther along the street—leaping distances of as much as seven feet at a time.

It is a German tradition that the master sweep works at the top of the chimney loosening soot for his assistant to collect in the fireplaces below.—MRS. I. HART, Lowestoft.

What About Us?

DENTISTS have a just grouse, and I agree that better financial prospects would, in time, lessen the shortage of dentists (JOHN BULL, January 15).

However, the lowest average earnings for a qualified man exceed £1,000 a year. Yet a graduate teacher begins his career on about half this. His maximum salary, which he attains after eighteen years' service, is still under £1,000—and, in many ways, a teacher's work is more arduous.—"SCOTTISH TEACHER," Invergordon.

. . . My dentist husband spent two hours on Christmas Eve performing an emergency operation on an injured motor-cyclist. For this he received no payment—nor did he expect it. He was glad to be of service.

Yet for two years he has been on the brink of a breakdown through overwork. And he must not be ill. There is no allowance for a sick dentist.—DENTIST'S WIFE, Otford.

. . . My daughter, aged nineteen, is in her fourth year as a dental student at a London hospital. And though much of her work is on National Health patients, we have had to spend £90 on her equipment for this year alone.

The Ministry of Health should help with students' expenses if young dentists are so badly needed.—D. L., Morden, Surrey.

At some hospitals, students can hire the instruments they need, says the British Dental Association. In any case, expense on equipment is not necessary until the last two years of training—and it has to be bought before a dentist can start a practice.

Soccer Sidestep

STAN CULLIS and I were in the Army Physical Training Corps together, and when I read the article by Wilfred Greatorex on Stan's success with the Wolves (JOHN BULL, January 22), I was reminded of the excursions we used to make together.

One Saturday afternoon, when he had been "guesting" for Aldershot, Stan was waylaid by young autograph hunters as we left the ground.

Seeing me grinning at his discomfort, Stan pointed at me and said to the youngsters: "I don't know why you're chasing me; Alex James is standing over there."

It took some desperate argument to convince those boys they were being fooled.—H. E. PARKER, Norton-on-Tees, Co. Durham.

Not For Learners

IN New York last Christmas, I found the shortage of car parking space even more acute than in our cities.

Admittedly, New Yorkers have better facilities—underground car parks for instance—but their cars are bigger and take more room.

A practice that we might borrow from them is to leave cars parked at

the kerbside, nose to tail, with the handbrakes off. This makes for tighter parking.

A driver leaving the line merely shunts his way out by driving gently against the cars in front and behind to clear a space.

The only requirement is to have tough bumpers at a standard height.—G. M. DICKENS, Exeter.

In this country it is illegal to leave a vehicle without setting the handbrake.

Good Men And Few

AFTER a discussion on juries, I had a look at our local electoral register. There are 400 electors in our little parish, but I found that only two were eligible for jury service. One was a shopkeeper and the other "the lady of the manor" who is a J.P.

Research in other village post offices showed that the situation in many other rural areas is similar.

It seems strange that, in these days of universal suffrage, feudalism should play a part in picking "twelve good men and true."—R. F. PHILLIPS, Cubert, Newquay.

In England and Wales, every man and woman between twenty-one and sixty is liable for jury service if certain property qualifications are fulfilled. A juror must be the owner, legally or under trust, of freehold land worth £10 a year or more, or of leasehold land worth £20 a year or more, where the lease is for at least twenty-one years. A householder resident in premises of £30 annual value in Middlesex and the County of London, or £20 elsewhere, is also liable.

IN JOHN BULL NEXT WEEK

A CURE FOR SERPENTS

The fascinating memoirs of a doctor among the colourful desert tribes of North Africa

Full details on page 22

John Bull pays one guinea for each letter published in "Free Speech," and at the usual rates for photographs. Readers with problems (other than medical) should write to the John Bull Free Advice Service

Peaches and Cream Cake

Having a party? That's a good reason for making this melt-in-the-mouth cake. But with Stork Margarine to help you, there's no need to wait for party time. So why don't you—and Stork—try this delicious recipe today?

4 ozs. Stork Margarine · 4 ozs. (4 rounded tablespoons) castor sugar
Finely grated rind of 1 lemon (optional)
2 eggs · 4 ozs. (4 heaped tablespoons) self-raising flour.

Filling and Topping

2 heaped tablespoons apricot jam
½ pint sweetened whipped cream (¼ pint if used for top only)
3-4 halves large tinned peaches
7-8 tinned or glacé cherries
5-6 large diamond shaped angelica leaves
5 tablespoons peach syrup (sweetened)
1½ level teaspoons arrowroot

Cream Stork and sugar, and beat in grated lemon rind. Beat in eggs one at a time, adding a little sieved flour with the second. Fold in remaining flour. Bake in 8-inch greased sandwich tin, with a round of greaseproof paper in bottom, on middle shelf of a moderate oven (Regulo Mark 4: 360 F.) for 35-40 minutes. Cool.

When cool, cut cake in half, and spread with jam and half the cream. Sandwich together. Cut peaches in half and arrange, with rounded side up, round edge of cake with a cherry between each two. With a forcing bag and rose tube pipe a pyramid of whipped cream in centre of cake, and insert angelica leaves half way up. Blend arrowroot with a little of the peach syrup, stir in remainder, and boil for three minutes stirring continuously. Cool, and coat peaches and cherries carefully with the mixture.

Look! I'm cutting out all these lovely Stork recipes and keeping them.—Why don't you, too!

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REQUIEM FOR A WREN

THERE WAS A layer of cumulus, about seven-tenths, as we came to Essendon airport; we broke out of it at two thousand feet and were on the circuit downwind, with the aerodrome on our starboard wing. I sat with my eyes glued to the window, looking out at Melbourne, because this was my home town and I had been away five years.

The hostess touched me on the arm and told me to fasten my safety belt. I had not seen the sign light up.

"Sorry," I said.

She smiled, and then she said quietly: "Would you like any help down the gangway, sir?"

I shook my head. "I'll wait till the others are all off. I'm all right if I take my time."

She nodded and moved on, courteous and efficient. I turned back to the window to watch the approach to the runway and the landing, and I remained absorbed in the technique till the machine came to a standstill at the terminal building.

While the other passengers got off I sat at the window, trying to see who was there to meet me. It was likely to be my father. I hadn't given them much notice, for I had only telegraphed the time of my arrival from Sydney when I landed there the previous evening, and it was barely two o'clock now; moreover, they weren't expecting me for another four days, and we live a hundred and twenty miles from the airport. The wing hid a good part of the enclosure, but I saw nobody I knew.

I followed the last passenger down the aisle to the door. I made slow time down the steps, but once on the flat I was all right, of course, and walked over to the enclosure. Then I caught sight of a familiar face. It was Harry Drew, our foreman, come to meet me.

"Morning, Harry," I said. "How are you today?"

"Good, Mr. Duncan," he replied. "We didn't expect you till Friday." He

My mother was deeply distressed. "Jessie must have been feeling terribly unhappy," she said quietly, "to take her own life"

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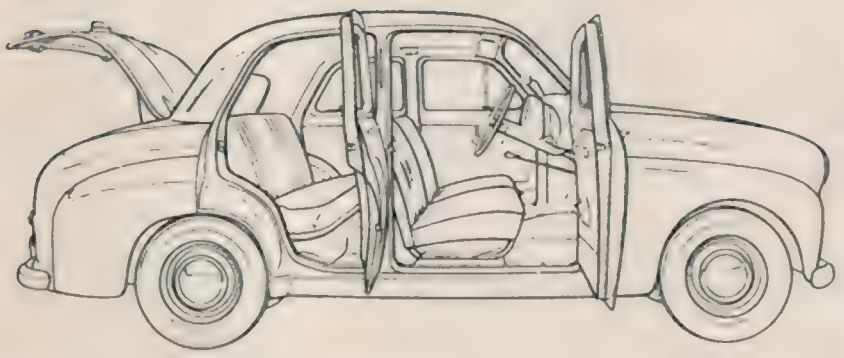

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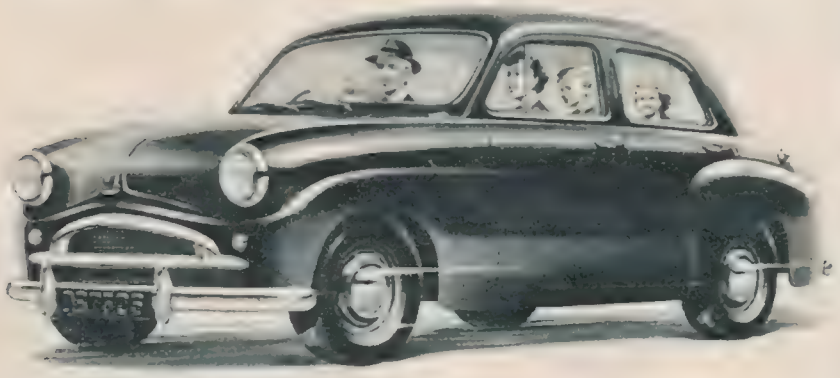

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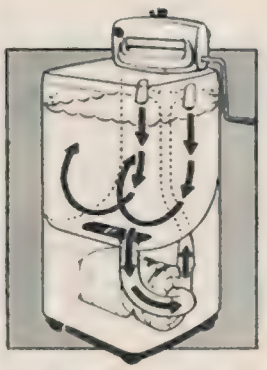

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lumber-room door. "It's all right, Annie," I said testily. "I was just taking a look in here"

Ballarat, I think it was. Working her way round the world, with a rucksack on her back—hiking, you might say. She worked in the hotel with Mrs. Collins for a week or two. Then she came out with the postman one day for the ride. Your parents had a Polish married couple, but the man was always on the grog, and your dad gave them the sack. Then this girl came along and offered herself for the job, and your mother took her on."

"How long ago was that?"

"Let's see," he said. "It was winter time. August, I'd say—August, a year ago."

I thought about it for a minute. "Do you know where she went for her holiday?"

"I don't think she took one—not while she was working at Coombargana."

"What was her name?"

"Jessie Proctor."

He weaved the car skilfully through the traffic of the town and turned off on to the Skipton road. "You may find your parents kind of upset," he said presently. "I think they liked her."

For some minutes we drove along in silence while I thought this over. "If she was happy in the place whatever made her go and do a thing like that?"

"I dunno, Mr. Alan," Harry replied. "I dunno what makes girls go and do all the things they do."

I sat silent. If my mother had grown attached to this girl, it made things so much the worse, and nothing was more likely, if she was a decent girl. My mother was now crippled with arthritis and could not get about very much, so that she met few people, and perhaps was rather lonely. An English girl working her way round the world would be a well-informed person, possibly even well-educated. She might have been a great comfort to my mother.

We passed through Skipton and came to Forfar, which is our village and about six miles from Coombargana, a little place of one long street straggling on the highway. I saw Tom Hicks, the garage owner, at his pumps, and waved my hand to him, and then we turned off on the gravel road to my home.

We crossed the river by the wooden bridge and swung round towards the house, and passed in to the drive between the great mossy concrete gate pillars. The place was well cared for, because my parents keep two gardeners going all the time. There are many better houses than Coombargana in England, but not many so well kept. The beds of daffodils were bright in the sunlight, masses of them, and behind the japonica bushes the camelias in bloom made a brave show of colour.

The car drew up before the door, and I thanked Harry and got out. The red door opened and my father was there on the steps to met me. He was thinner than he had been and his face had a white, pallid hue I didn't like at all, but he was the same old dad.

He said, "Hallo, Alan. You're back earlier than we thought."

"I know," I said. "I got hung up in London and had to miss the boat. I flew through America."

"So that was it! We thought you must have flown. How did you get the dollars to come through America?"

I grinned. "There are ways and means."

He laughed. "Well, come on in and see your mother." Harry was unloading my two suitcases from the boot. "Stick them just inside the door, Harry, and I'll get John to take them up presently." He turned to me. "I'm not allowed to lift anything now."

"I can manage them," I said. "I can take them up, one at a time."

He hesitated. "Would you rather do that?"

"I like doing everything I can."

"All right." He said no more about my disability, but told Harry to put the car away. We went together into the great hall.

"I expect Harry told you about the trouble here?" my father said.

I nodded. "I was very sorry to hear it."

"We'll talk about that later," he said. "Come on and see your mother. I kept her in bed today." He paused. "Did I tell you that we sleep on the ground floor now?"

I was surprised. "No."

He nodded. "Your mother can't manage the stairs alone, so we turned the billiards-room into our bedroom, with the gunroom as my dressing-room. "It's worked out quite well."

He led the way into the old billiards-room. They had redecorated it, and with the french windows opening on to the lawn it made a sunny, pleasant room. My mother was sitting up in bed, not very much changed in her appearance. I kissed her. "Back at last," I said. "You're looking very well, Mum."

She held me for a moment. "Oh, Alan dear," she said, "it *is* nice to have you back. But how did you get here so soon?"

I told her my story about being held up in London and missing the ship, and complimented her on the arrangement of the room. My father went out and Mother asked me about Helen, and I spent a few minutes answering all her questions about my sister in London.

Helen was the youngest of us; she had gone to England in 1946 when she was twenty-four, avid to get away into a wider world, like many young Australians. In England she had gone all arty and crafty and had picked up with a chap called Laurence Hilton who worked for the B.B.C. She married him in 1947 and had not been home since; they had one child, rather an unpleasant little boy. I had tried to like Laurence, but we had very little in common.

I gave my mother a roseate, expurgated

account of Helen and Laurence and their way of life, stressing its importance and the reputation that Laurence Hilton was building up in the artistic world. My father came in again then, pushing a tea trolley. There was trouble about the tea, because my father had forgotten the tea-strainer and the hot-water jug, and my mother sent him off to get them.

"We're all a bit upside down today," she said sadly. "We haven't had to do this ourselves for so long."

"I know," I said. "Harry told me. I was very sorry to hear about it."

"Yes," my mother said quietly, "it's been a very great blow to us, Alan. I'm so sorry that it had to happen on the very day that you come home."

"That's all right," I said. "I'm glad in a way it did happen now, if it had to. Tell me, has there got to be an inquest?"

She nodded. "Dr. Bateman, he's the coroner. He's coming out tomorrow morning, with the police."

"Why did she do it, Mum?" I asked. "Was she depressed?"

My mother said, "I don't think so. She was just as usual, I think. She was a very reserved girl, Alan. It was rather difficult to know what she thought of anything."

"Was she attractive, Mother? Attractive to men?"

She shook her head. "I don't think so. She was rather plain. I'm sure it wasn't anything like that."

"Have you got any idea why she did it?"

"I think it was an accident, Alan. There was this bottle of sleeping-tablets by her bedside, quite a big bottle, with only two left in it. Dr. Stanley said he thought she must have taken at least twenty." She paused. "*I* think she took one, perhaps, when she went to bed, and then had a nightmare or something, and got up, sort of sleep-walking, and took tablet after tablet. I'm *sure* it was an accident."

It was a possibility. I thought for a moment. "Did she get any letters yesterday?"

"She never had any."

"Never had any letters?"

My father came back with the tea-strainer and the hot-water jug and put them on the trolley. "I was telling Alan about Jessie," my mother said, and now there was a suspicion of moisture about her eyes, and a break in her voice. "He was asking if she got a letter yesterday."

"She never got any mail at all," my father said.

I stared at him. "That's very unusual, surely. Did she write any?"

"I don't think so. I usually take the mail in when I go, but she never gave me anything to take."

"Could she write?" I asked. Sometimes a domestic servant can't.

"Oh, yes. She was a well educated girl," my mother said. "Very well educated."

She leaned from her bed and poured out the tea.

"Do you know anything about her relatives?" I asked. "You've sent a telegram?"

My father said: "We haven't, Alan. There's not a scrap of anything in her room to tell us who she was. Only her clothes and a few novels."

My mother passed me my tea, and I sat with it in my hand. I did not want to say what I was thinking, that here was clear evidence of suicide, because my mother wanted to believe it was an accident, and maybe it was better that she should. But if the girl before her death had taken pains to destroy evidence of her identity it meant that her death was planned beforehand. It must mean that.

My mother said: "She told me once that she only landed in Australia a few weeks before she came to us from the hotel."

"She never told anyone what she'd been doing before she went to the hotel?" I asked.

My mother shook her head. "She never talked about herself at all."

"She was probably married," I suggested.

My parents stared at me in astonishment; the thought was quite a new one to them. I said slowly: "An unsatisfactory marriage that she wanted to forget about. That would explain why she didn't talk about her past life. If all her documents were in her married name, it would explain why she destroyed them. She would have wanted to make a completely fresh start."

My father said: "Well, that's a new idea entirely." He paused. "It certainly seems to fit the facts."

I pursued my line of thought. "Proctor is almost certainly her maiden name. We'll have to try and find the husband, or the police will. He'll have to be told about her death."

My father sighed with relief. "I think you've got it, Alan," he said. "It's by far the most likely idea so far. And it accounts for everything." He turned to me. "I don't mind telling you, I've been worried over this. The inquest is tomorrow, and it's going to make a lot of trouble if we don't know who she is."

"Don't worry about it, Dad," I said. "I'll go to the inquest."

"I'll have to come with you," he said.

It seemed to me that we had talked about this rather unsavoury business long enough. I began to ask questions about the property. And my mother, of course, wanted to know all about my life in London, so that we had much to talk about.

My mother seemed much brighter when she had had her tea, and announced her intention of getting up for dinner, which I thought was a good thing and better for her than lying in bed thinking about the dead parlourmaid upstairs.

It was arranged that my father would drive me round the property for a couple of hours in the Land-Rover before dinner while my mother got up and dressed and organized the dinner with Annie, our old cook.

We finished tea and my father proceeded to wheel the trolley out through the big, galleried central hall to the pantry. I stayed for a moment with my mother. She said: "I think you're wrong about Jessie, Alan."

"In what way?" I asked.

"About her being married," said my mother quietly. "I'm sure she wasn't."

I was silent, because it's a difficult subject for a bachelor to dispute with a woman of my mother's age. "Did she ever say she wasn't?" I asked at last.

My mother shook her head. "She never said anything at all about her own affairs. But I'm quite sure she wasn't married."

As old age had crept upon my father and mother, they had reduced the scale of their expenditure upon themselves to quite a small proportion of their net income. They never had kept racehorses, as many of our neighbours do, and they had outgrown the pleasures of spending money. They got a book each month through a book club, and they bought a few gramophone records when they were in Melbourne but, with increasing years and infirmity, they got more pleasure out of old things than new, out of old books that they had read fifteen or twenty years before and turned back to now with pleasure, out of old gramophone records, out of furniture bought thirty years ago.

Helen's allowance and my own had absorbed a good slice of their net income after taxation, which in recent years had fluctuated between £20,000 and £30,000 a year. Much of the rest had been saved and invested prudently to provide for death duties on an estate which might well be assessed at £250,000 upon my father's death, but this cash reserve was now adequate for any calls that were likely to be made on it.

In other countries and in other circles a prosperity such as ours might be accompanied by wild parties in the city, with a nude girl in a bath of champagne in the middle of the dinner table and a dozen crashed motor-cars next morning. In the Western District things have never been like that; perhaps an agricultural prosperity doesn't go that way. Certainly Australian wool producers, those who survived the hard times of the thirties when wool was down to a shilling a pound, got such an economic fright as would keep them in the straight and narrow path for the rest of their lives.

My father's great interest was in the property. Wherever I looked, there was something new, new stockyards, new spray sheep dips, new windmills, and new dams.

We went into the long shearing shed and rested for a few minutes in the long, cool aisle, leaning against a table, looking round.

"Mother doesn't seem to think much of my idea that the girl was married," I said. "How old was she?"

"Twenty-eight or thirty, I should say. It's difficult to judge."

"Harry said she never took a holiday."

"I don't think she did. She went into

The roof was my last chance. If there wa

nothing of Jessie Proctor's hidden up here, I would not know where to look. Crawling along through the dust on my hands and knees, I began my search

Ballarat once or twice for shopping, but apart from that I don't think she left the place the whole time she was here."

"What did she do on her days off?"

He thought for a minute. "I think she was interested in the property," he said. "She liked shooting, too. I never had much to do with her, outside; she kept her place, you know. The men say that she was a very fine shot at rabbits, either with a gun or a rifle. They say she never seemed to miss." He paused. "I've been wondering if she was a farmer's daughter perhaps, back at home."

I nodded. "You don't know what part of England she came from?"

"I don't."

We sat silent for a minute. Then I glanced at him and said: "What do you think about this theory of Mother's, that it was an accident? I didn't want to say too much in front of Mother. Would you say she was a suicidal type?"

He said: "I simply don't know, Alan. I'd have said she was too level-headed. But who's to say?"

"Do you think it was an accident, Dad?" I asked. "I've never heard of anyone taking as many as twenty sleeping-tablets by mistake." There was a pause. "I can't think it was an accident," I said at last. "I'm sorry, Dad, but I should say it was deliberate."

He stood up, and I was deeply sorry for him, for he looked so old. "Well, don't tell your mother that," he said. "It's better if she thinks it was an accident. I'm hoping that we'll get the coroner to see it that way in the morning. If it *was* deliberate, we'll probably never know the reason, and there's no sense in stirring up trouble."

We left the shed and got back into the Land-Rover and went on with our tour around the property.

As we drove along, I told Dad about my time in chambers, in Lincoln's Inn. "I don't know that I haven't wasted my time," I said quietly at last. "I don't know that being called to the bar is going to help me much in running Coombargana."

He smiled. "Do you think you'll want to go back and live in England?"

"I don't think so," I said. "I think I've got that out of my system."

"What about getting married? Have you thought about it? You ought to. You're getting on, you know."

"It's never happened to come my way."

"You ought to think about it," he repeated. "It's going to be mighty lonely if you try and carry on this place alone after our time."

I looked across at him. "It's not so easy when you're a cripple," I said. "It needs special qualities in a girl to settle down, married to a chap that's got no feet."

"Well, think it over," he said irresolutely. And then he said: "You never thought of flying again, I suppose?"

"As a matter of fact, I did," I told him. "Not in Typhoons, of course. I did quite a lot of flying at the London Aeroplane Club, at Panshanger, on Tiger Moths and Austers. I didn't tell you in the letters because I was afraid it might worry Mother."

"Are you going on with it here?"

"I doubt it," I said. "I just wanted to show myself that I wasn't afraid of it and that I could do it still, even with dummy feet."

We drove back. At the house we found my mother in the drawing-room seated before the

Continued on page 34

Hunter with a falcon on his fist

by JOHN ENNIS

Philip Glasier searches cliffs and crags for his birds. He teaches them to hunt game for him—and to become film stars

Glasier attracts falcons back to his gloved fist

WHEN PHILIP GLASIER, a Salisbury photographer, heard a few months ago that two large birds of prey were to be shot after the death of their owner he offered to give them a home. The birds lived in the late owner's private zoo at Cuckfield, Sussex—an eagle owl and a lesser spotted eagle. Each had a wing span of five feet six inches.

A farmer who was caring for the birds warned Glasier that catching them would be difficult and dangerous.

Glasier and a friend, Ian Doe, took to Cuckfield a hamper, two sacks and a trapping net known as a fling-over. The trap works when the bird tries to eat bait. But now it was useless: the farmer had just fed the birds on raw meat.

With leather gauntlets on their left hands, Glasier and Doe each carried a sack into the twenty-foot shed where the eagle owl was kept. Men moving furniture from the nearby house stopped work to watch. "They'll tear your eyes out, mister," said one.

Glasier went to one end of the shed, and Doe to the other. The eagle owl flew at Glasier. He grabbed at it, and missed. The bird flew at Doe. He caught it by one leg. As it struggled to get free, Glasier ran across to help, and they pushed it into a sack. Next, they went into the cage where the spotted eagle sat on a perch. "Before it could move, I grabbed it by the legs and popped it into the other sack," says Glasier. "The onlookers seemed disappointed. I think they hoped to see us lacerated."

Philip Glasier, a bearded forty-year-old expert falconer, admits that an inexperienced man could have been injured trying to catch the birds. From the age of nine he has handled and trained birds of prey. He is one of about thirty people in Britain who still hunt game with hawks and falcons. He provides sport for his weekends and food for his table by methods almost exactly the same as those of falconers and austringers (trainers of hawks) in the Middle Ages. He believes that his sport is kinder than shooting, which, he says, "leaves many birds and animals wounded." Any creature attacked by a hawk or a falcon either escapes unhurt or is killed outright.

The layman's ignorance of birds of prey often annoys Glasier. On one occasion he was refused permission to hunt because shooting people feared his birds would drive all the game from the district. "They forget that wild hawks fly over every day," he says.

Bit One Of Her Fingers

He struggles to return a polite answer when people look at a hawk he is carrying and ask: "Is it an eagle?" But he was goaded into a sharp remark after a woman gushingly asked if she might safely stroke a hobby falcon, a small bird that preys on insects. The hobby was so tame that Glasier allowed his children to play with it, so he told the woman to go ahead. She reached out her hand, and the bird nipped one of her lacquer-tipped fingers. "What can you expect if you wear blood-stained finger-nails?" asked Glasier.

Besides the eagle owl from the private zoo (he gave away the lesser spotted eagle), Glasier has three peregrine falcons, a goshawk and a Bonelli's eagle, all in the garden of his cottage at Barford St. Martin, near Salisbury. He catches some of his birds himself, mostly in Ireland, climbing cliffs to take young falcons from the eyrie.

If the wild bird is very young, he turns it loose in a shed until its feathers harden in the quill. When the feathers are "fully down" and unlikely to break with handling, he begins the first stage of training, known as "manning." Holding the bird by a leather leash attached to its feet, he persuades it to perch on his gauntleted left fist, and to feed while it perches there. For days, he carries the bird on his fist in every spare moment. In his studio, he has a perch where he places half-trained birds to get them used to the people who pass in and out while he works.

Glasier finds that he can safely fly a goshawk from his fist after five weeks of "manning," and a falcon after three weeks. By this time the birds have learned that their food is to be found in his gloved left hand, and he is confident they will return there.

Hawks will fly direct to the fist, but he attracts his falcons by a "lure," an imitation bird which he swings on the end of a line.

Some time ago, Glasier was training a small hawk in a field. Children paused in their play to watch. Glasier did not discourage them, because their excited chatter helped in the manning process. As he left for home, with the two-pound bird on his fist, a woman called: "Here, I'd like to speak to you." He walked over to her. Angrily she told him; "Your dirty great vulture's frightened my little boy."

When the birds are fully trained, Glasier hunts with them. He takes the falcons out in the autumn, into open, unwooded country where they are unlikely to fly out of sight. If he takes more than one, he fastens leather hoods, plumed and decorated like tiny knights' helmets, over the heads of those awaiting their turn to fly. The hoods cover the falcons' eyes, and presumably persuade the birds that night has fallen. Hooded, they sit motionless.

Glasier took two peregrine falcons, Kate and Pandora, to the Royal Show at Windsor last

Nicholas, Glasier's son, reaches up to stroke a peregrine. Once, a woman told Glasier: "Your dirty great vulture's frightened my little boy"

by a "lure," an imitation bird which he swings on a line. He is one of with birds of prey. The sport, he says, is kinder than shooting

On the set of *Knights of the Round Table*, Glasier shows a bird to Robert Taylor and Maureen Swanson. Glasier trained five falcons for the film

year. They perched on one of the stands, hooded, and Glasier spoke of their exploits to interested spectators.

On the last day of the show he left the stand for a while. He returned to find a man who had worked on the same stand for four days pointing to one of the birds and repeating Glasier's story of the number of kills the falcon had scored. "Please," said Glasier, "that one's stuffed."

Anticipating a struggle in getting his equipment away among the departing crowds, he had left Kate at home and taken a stuffed bird instead. "Nobody noticed," he says. "The wind was ruffling both birds' feathers, and Pandora wasn't moving any more than the stuffed falcon."

Because they have noticed that a stuffed hawk often appears alive, some people set one in the middle of a garden to keep away birds. "They are wasting their time," says Glasier. "The birds aren't even frightened of a live hawk." Far from being afraid, many birds will mob a hawk, especially when it has a crop full of food. "They seem to know when it's not in a hunting mood." He insists that his birds' quarry has at least two chances in three of escape.

Hoped To Frighten Birds

Glasier is scornful of an effort made some years ago to clear flocks of small birds from airfields. The birds were proving a danger to aircraft on take-off and landing, and falcons were flown in the hope of scaring them away. "Once the falcon was off the wing, the birds came back in about twenty minutes," says Glasier. "The airfield was their feeding ground, and they had to eat."

When Glasier releases a peregrine falcon, it flies to a height of between four hundred and eight hundred feet. There it "waits on," flying in circles and searching for prey with eyes that can see, from this height, the movement of a large beetle on the ground. Glasier's pointer dog, Trudy, shows him where the game lie, and he "flushes" the birds. Seeing them get up, the falcon "stoops"—hurtles down in a dive powered by swift wing-beats.

Glasier sends up the falcon to wait on when he is hunting partridge or grouse. To fly at rooks, crows and magpies, he takes off the falcon's hood and releases the bird as its quarry flies by.

Swiftly the falcon climbs high above the other bird, then stoops. If it misses, it swings up from the bottom of its stoop, and its momentum carries it to a height from which it can stoop again. "I have often seen a falcon stoop thirty times at a rook," says Glasier.

The goshawk, which Glasier uses for winter hunting in partly wooded country, works like a flying greyhound, flying directly behind the quarry and following every twist and turn. It hunts pheasants, partridges, ducks, rabbits, grey squirrels and rats, and is often flying at more than forty miles an hour within inches of the ground.

As falconers and austringers did centuries ago, Glasier attaches small brass bells to the legs of his birds to guide him to them if he loses sight of them. When he finds them, he retrieves the game and calls them back to his fist.

Finding a hawk after its flight can be uncomfortable. Some time ago, Glasier went out on a frosty morning to help to fly a goshawk belonging to a friend. The friend warned him not to shout for the hawk to be released after moor-hen as they usually flew across a nearby lake on to an island.

"I saw something move, and I shouted," Glasier recalls. "Too late I realized it was a moor-hen. By then my friend had let the hawk go, and sure enough the two birds flew across the lake. The hawk caught the moor-hen in mid-air and carried it to the island."

The other man took off his gumboots and riding breeches, and in his shirt-tails waded through the shallow, icy water. Bare-legged, he floundered through the thick, thorny brambles that covered the island. "He found his hawk, but he was annoyed because I laughed," says Glasier. "Now, however, he admits that he must have looked pretty funny."

In December, 1952, the property department of the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer film company telephoned Glasier and asked him where they could buy two dozen falcons for the film *Knights of the Round Table*.

Like A Commando Course

"They seemed annoyed when I told them they couldn't buy falcons in Britain," says Glasier. "Falconers are too fond of their birds to risk selling them to inexperienced people."

He had one falcon at the time. The film company commissioned him to get some more and train them, with an understanding that the falcons remained his property. The following June he went to Ireland and searched among cliffs for eyries. "It was like a commando course," he says. "Sometimes I spent hours getting to an eyrie, only to find that crows had taken the eggs." He returned with five birds.

Three weeks later he had them trained. The director feared long delays in getting the falconry shots. "But we didn't have a single retake owing to the falcons," says Glasier. One day he watched for three hours while director and camera crews tried to persuade a trick horse to nod its head. Then the director said, "We'll do the falcon shot."

It took ten minutes. "An hour later," says Glasier, "after taking off my make-up and costume, I saw them all still wearily trying to make the horse nod its head." THE END

"WHAT ARE YOU doing, Daddles?" came the voice of Lady Ridway from the adjoining bedroom. "You've been standing in front of that mirror admiring yourself for the last ten minutes."

General Sir Humphrey Ridway, K.C.B., K.C.S.I., K.C.M.G.—Daddles to his intimates—looked at his reflection in the mirror and sighed. Even the wirelike points of his moustache had wilted.

"I'm afraid," he said sadly, "there isn't very much left to admire."

"Then why stand there admiring it?"

"My dear," said the general, his voice laden with a kind of weary patience, "if I reply truthfully, you will accuse me of being disgusting. If I dissemble, you will accuse me of being secretive and deceitful. Either way, I shall be in the wrong."

"Daddles," came Lady Ridway's penetrating contralto, "I insist upon knowing what you are doing."

"Very well, my dear Julia," he replied. "I will tell you. I am engaged in scraping dark brown fur off my tongue with the flat edge of a toothbrush handle. I think also that I have been stabbed in the region of the liver with a blunt can opener."

"Don't be disgusting! I have heard quite enough," snapped his wife. "I hope you haven't forgotten that Horace arrives today."

"I have not, my dear. Indeed, the imminent arrival of your brother Horace is at least partly responsible for my condition."

"If you had Horace's brains and enterprise, we shouldn't be spending the winter in this sixth-rate boarding-house."

This was unjust, for the Pension Seaview, where this early-morning exchange took place, was fourth-rate. Situated upon the sun-drenched slopes behind Cannes, it provided a relatively warm winter refuge from the British climate at modest rates within the reach of retired colonial officials, army officers and their wives.

"If I had some of Horace's qualities, my dear," retorted the general acidly, "I should probably be spending the winter in a cell."

"Don't you dare say such vile things about poor Horace!" said Lady Ridway. "Horace was careless—once, but that doesn't entitle you to malign him."

"I wouldn't dream of maligning Horace, my dear. Besides," added the general, "it isn't necessary. It's been done—by an expert. Do you remember what the judge said when the Anglo-Patagonian Investment Trust blew up? Very pretty turn of phrase that judge had! I particularly liked his heartbroken manner when he regretted his inability to give Horace seven years. It nearly broke my heart, too. Thanks to Horace, we had two thousand pounds in that swindle. If we had it now we might be able to afford to stay at a fifth-rate boarding-house instead of a sixth-rate one."

Conscious that the honours of this first verbal battle of the day were with him, General Ridway disappeared into the bathroom.

Lady Ridway's family was traditionally army. Her brother Horace had broken with tradition

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Horace looked up. "Good heavens," he said, "you look just like my brother-in-law did twenty years ago—before he took to booze"

Sir Humphrey and the atom cure

by ***ROBERT STANDISH***

ILLUSTRATED BY EDWIN PHILLIPS

Slim, alert, moustache bristling—Sir Humphrey had been transformed. If atomic water could do this for a man, there was a fortune in it!

by going into the City, whence he had graduated as a successful company promoter, but successful to the limited degree that he, too often, was the only person to make any money out of the companies he floated.

When General Ridway emerged from the bathroom, he seemed pale. He drank his tea in silence and, as soon as he was dressed, set off in the direction of the Cannes bus.

Luigi, the bartender of the Hotel Magnifico, was just coming on duty when the general arrived. He was attentive and sympathetic. Having helped to destroy some of the most distinguished livers in Europe, Luigi understood only too well how distressing any derangement of that vital organ could be.

"General," he said firmly, "there is only one thing to do. You must put yourself in the hands of Doctor Castel. I will telephone him now to ascertain whether he has a room vacant. You will go there this afternoon, yes?"

"What does this Castel do?" asked the general suspiciously.

"He makes you drink the radioactive water. There is a spring in the garden which is nothing short of miraculous. You will see that I am right, General."

GENERAL RIDWAY entered the Pension Seaview at noon after engaging to catch the afternoon bus to La Bastide, a small village in the Maritime Alps, some forty miles from Cannes, where Doctor Castel's clinic was situated. When he went into the lounge to announce his intention to Lady Ridway, he found her in animated conversation with her brother.

"Hullo, Daddles!" said Horace. "Nice to see you."

"Hullo, Horace!" retorted the general with less enthusiasm. "Still at liberty, I see."

"Hush!" said his wife furiously.

Then the luncheon bell rang and all three went into the dining-room to eat the curry for which the Pension Seaview was famous.

Lady Ridway did not demur when the general announced his departure for the mountains that afternoon. He and his brother-in-law were so incompatible, she decided, that the strain of keeping the peace between them would be too much for her.

A week later Lady Ridway received the following letter from her husband:

Clinique Castel,
La Bastide (Alpes-Maritimes),
March 3, 1953

My dear Julia: My sufferings here baffle all description. My dinner last night, for example, consisted of some vegetable soup, and very little of it, a slice of roast veal cut thin with a sharp razor, a puddle of radioactive spinach and a small portion of goat cheese. This, as you can see for yourself, is merely slow starvation.

Ever since arriving here my back teeth have been awash with radioactive water. But—and justice compels me to admit this—I feel more cheerful. If handed a loaded gun, I doubt very much whether today I would shoot myself. My privations are appalling, but the fact is that I walked four miles today and have lost twelve pounds in weight.

I hope you are enjoying Horace's visit as much as I am, and that you have duly warned our fellow guests to keep their valuables—if any—under lock and key. Castel intends to keep me here two weeks more. I trust that by then Horace will have taken his larcenous tendencies back to London. Give him my regards.

Yours affectionately,

DADDLES.

Two weeks to the day after the dispatch of this letter there strode into the lounge of the Pension Seaview a handsome, soldierlike man whom the hall porter failed to recognize. His movements were brisk and alert, suggesting a man in the prime of life, while the points of his silvery moustache bristled aggressively. His clothes seemed too large for him. Several people in the lounge, including Horace, failed to recognize the transformed General Ridway.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Horace, looking up in amazement. "Excuse me, sir," he added hastily, "but you're the living image of what my brother-in-law used to look like twenty-odd years ago—before he took to booze and had to be carted off to a sanatorium somewhere in the mountains."

"Horace," roared the general, "will you kindly stop blathering and tell me where Julia is!"

"Gad! It is you, Daddles, after all! Better let me break it gently to Julia or the shock's liable to kill her."

Just then Lady Ridway entered the lounge. Taking one look at her husband, she emitted a loud shriek and collapsed into an easy chair.

"What have they done to you?" she asked in an awestruck whisper. "It's positively—indecent!"

IT was not long before the gallant old soldier was the centre of a congratulatory and faintly envious throng of elderly men and women who wondered wistfully where and how he had stumbled upon the secret of eternal youth. From this throng Horace was conspicuously absent. Horace, essentially the practical man, the man of action, was upstairs packing, and when that afternoon's bus stopped outside the Clinique Castel, the first passenger to alight was Horace, who was determined to learn at first hand the details of the miracle wrought there.

Three weeks later, Horace, rejuvenated and barely recognizable, strode briskly into the lounge of the Pension Seaview and hailed his sister and brother-in-law heartily.

"Daddles, old top," he declared, "the thing's a gold mine."

"What's a gold mine?" asked the general suspiciously.

"Doctor Castel's radioactive spring, of course. I'm calling it the Fountain of Eternal Youth—going to incorporate under the laws of Tangier—simpler that way. Very accommodating people in Tangier. They don't ask awkward questions.

"We shall build a four-hundred-room hotel to begin with. The old crocks, of course, will come in the summer, while in winter we shall fill up with winter-sports people — charge

Continued on page 49

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(says Edmundo Ros)

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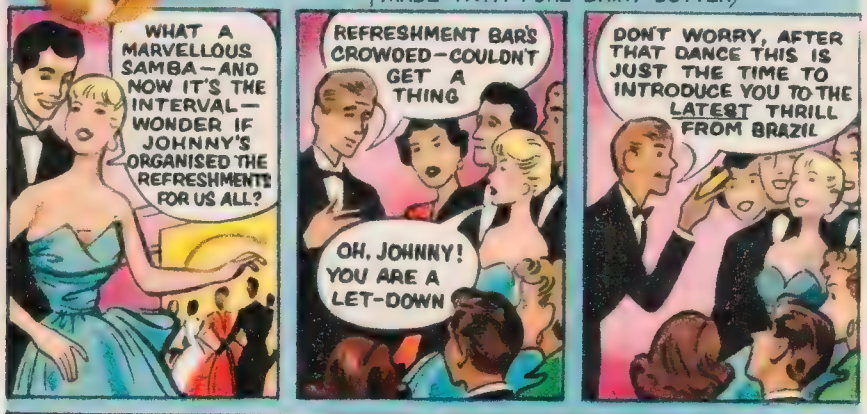
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Concluding I SAID IT WITH MUSIC *by Jack Payne*

I gamble in show business – and win a happy family

In his search for new stars, Jack risked his money on three promising entertainers. One of them was Max Bygraves; Frankie Howerd was another—and the third became Mrs. Jack Payne

PEGGY COCHRANE AND I did not fall desperately in love at our first friendly conversation. After all, neither of us was lacking in years of experience. Peggy had been widowed after an unhappy marriage; and, at forty, I was separated from my wife.

We became well acquainted one week in Birmingham in 1939. Peggy was appearing in variety there; I was producing a show, one of my first ventures after quitting the footlights: on the stage, I had reached the top and reckoned that was the time to stop—and become a producer. One night in the Queen's Hotel, we talked about music and show business, and found that we shared similar ideas.

Peggy, knowing that I ran an artists' agency apart from my own productions, asked if I would take over her management. I suggested that we meet in London to discuss the project in detail. I wanted an excuse for meeting her and talking to her again. It was not until half past two in the morning that we left the lounge and went to our rooms.

Fondled Lion Cubs At Circus

We met again much sooner than I expected. The next morning, at the suggestion of a publicity agent, we visited a circus where a lioness had just had a litter. We were photographed together fondling the cubs. Later, in London, Peggy came to my office and we signed a contract. I began to see her often, and to discover that here was a woman with whom I had a great deal in common.

With Peggy, I put Billy Scott Coomber and Teddy Foster and his Band into a show and sold it, under the title of *Say It With Melody*, to a cinema circuit for a three-week trial in the provinces. The show fitted as a one-hour "package" between the films. It was simple but it did well, and toured the whole country.

My business prospered. Hard experience had taught me how to present an economical, profitable entertainment. Some time earlier, I had produced a lavish spectacle called *Round The Dial*, which had run to consistently packed houses—and lost money. The show contained a series of gay production numbers set in such places as Vienna, Montmartre, Budapest, and finally New York, with a cabaret. All the artists and their costumes, and the scenery and labour required to handle it, cost more per week than the box offices could possibly take. I had been too ambitious, and a poor theatrical accountant. I had to take the show off.

The outbreak of war temporarily crippled

Jack with his wife and their daughter Anne, at their house near Penshurst. "Peggy and I have built a solid partnership, a friendly home," he says

Jack and his wife first heard Lizbeth Webb over the radio. Next day he gave her a job

Payne (left) with Evelyn Laye and the compère of *Songtime On The Laager*, a wartime programme for South Africa. Back at the B.B.C. after a nine-year absence, Jack worked sixteen hours a day

show business. Fearing immediate widespread bombing, theatres closed. Then General Beith—the playwright Ian Hay—who was Public Relations Officer at the War Office, asked me to see him. "What do you propose to do now?" he said.

"With my flying experience, I hope to join the R.A.F."

"If you want to do a really important job, Jack, I should re-form the band."

"With all the theatres closed?"

"Entertainment," Ian said, "is going to play a vastly important rôle in keeping up morale."

So, within a few months of retiring from the footlights, I found myself behind them again. But bad luck dogged my first troop concert tour. The newly formed band and I sailed with a group of supporting artists for France on Christmas Eve, 1939, to appear in a Christmas Day broadcast with Gracie Fields from Rheims.

Fog first delayed our ship in Dover Harbour. Then, at Calais on Christmas morning, no transport awaited us; the Ensa official there did not even know that we were arriving in that particular boat. For hours we searched in vain for transport. Eventually we got as far as Amiens by train, missing the broadcast at Rheims. The relatives of my company were even more distressed when they did not hear us on the air; they thought we had been sunk in the Channel.

A second stroke of ill-fortune occurred a few days later when I travelled by car from Rouen to Le Havre with Peggy Cochrane, Peggy McCormack and Billy Scott Coomber—my vocalists—and an army driver. Ten miles outside Rouen, on an icy road, I saw two British army officers waving for a lift at the top of a long, steep hill. I asked our driver to stop.

At between forty and fifty miles an hour, he braked too sharply. The car started sliding sideways downhill. For about a hundred yards it took a straight course, then it shot across the road towards a telegraph pole. Crunching into the pole, the car swung round and somersaulted into a ditch. Someone gave me a terrific kick in the back as we landed, then everything fell terribly quiet.

"Peggy!" I shouted. "Peggy!" There was no reply.

Oh my God, I thought. *She's dead.*

In a daze, I shoved open a door. I heard a whimper from under the broken seats and glass beneath me. I struggled out of the car, moved some of the debris, took hold of Peggy's shoulders and dragged her out. Happily, she and the others were only badly stunned, bruised and cut.

One of the officers who had run from the hilltop to help us suddenly grasped my hands. "There's petrol all over the place," he said. I looked down and found myself about to strike a match to light a cigarette which I had put between my lips seconds before the crash.

When we returned from the troop concerts in France, the band and I toured Britain once again. The theatres had opened one by one as the phoney war progressed and, with the public starved of entertainment, we did terrific business. The air raids did not deter the audiences, either. When the Luftwaffe first attacked Manchester, we were appearing at a cinema there. The alert sounded at eight o'clock. I told the audience that the show would go on. Very few people left their seats.

The Audience Left At Dawn

When the show proper ended at ten o'clock, we ad-libbed while the bombs fell outside. We played and sang loudly to drown the explosions, and every time we heard one nearby, we shouted in unison: "Why doesn't somebody shut that door?" The impromptu entertainment ended and the audience went home when the all-clear sounded—at six thirty in the morning.

We played similarly through blitzes in Birmingham, Leeds, Sheffield, Bristol. One day in Bristol, John Watt, then head of variety at the B.B.C., met me. "Jack," he said, "what about

A CURE FOR SERPENTS

DR. ALBERTO DENTI was in despair. Nothing he could say or do could cure the stubborn old desert nobleman of his pains. The old man was convinced that his trouble was due to a serpent which had been lodged in his stomach by an evil spirit.

At last Denti decided to change his tactics. "Perhaps you are right," he said. "The only thing to do is to take a look." He then anaesthetized his patient, slit him down the middle, sewed him up—and presented him with a huge snake bought for the purpose. The cure was complete.

Alberto Denti di Pirajno

This true story gives the title to a remarkable new book to be serialized in JOHN BULL, beginning next week. In *A Cure For Serpents*, Alberto Denti di Pirajno tells of his twenty years spent as a doctor and administrator among the little-known desert peoples of North Africa.

Among his bizarre patients are the Berbers of Nalut, who live like troglodytes in the desert mountains, and the colourful nomadic Tuaregs, known as "The Veiled Family." A strange mixture of magnificence and poverty, the Tuaregs are rag-tailed but lordly men who wander the desert, begging, fighting and composing songs in praise of their women—women who, custom decrees, may never wash in all their lives.

A Cure For Serpents is an Arabian Nights story, but more fascinating because the incidents and people in it are real. The first absorbing instalment appears . . .

IN JOHN BULL NEXT WEEK

Carole Carr was fourteen when Payne auditioned her. He changed her name—and made her a star

coming back to the B.B.C. with your band?" The wheel had turned full circle. The war had brought me out of my stage retirement; now it put me back on the air with regular programmes, after an absence of nine years.

Often working sixteen hours a day, we broadcast on the Home, European and Overseas programmes. We did a regular anti-Nazi propaganda show which was beamed to Germany; an Australian programme called *Boomerang Club*; a show for South Africa called *Songtime On The Laager*.

Played Serenade For Molotov

One British programme, called *Favourites Of The Famous*, brought me a slight rebuff from Winston Churchill. For a gimmick, we asked well-known people to tell us their favourite tunes so that we could play them on the air. Molotov chose Serenade For Strings, Anthony Eden, just back from Russia, picked 1812, Eric Coates asked for Slap That Bass. When I asked Churchill for his favourite piece, his secretary brought this reply: "Tell him I haven't time to think of tunes. I am too busily involved trying to win a war."

We worked from half a dozen studios in bomb-torn London—from a former ice rink in Maida Vale, from the Criterion and Paris Theatres, from Broadcasting House, and from underground studios in Aldwych. One night, Lionel Gamlin and I went to one studio to start a programme, pushed open the door and found Sir Stephen Tallents, the Overseas Services Controller, just getting into a bed. With the studio lights flashing a red warning to indicate that the microphone would be live in a few seconds, there was no time for apologies and explanations. Sir Stephen beat a hasty but dignified retreat in his pyjamas and dressing-gown, until the broadcast had finished.

The wartime radio censorship annoyed me as a musician. At the start of the war, the B.B.C. banned the work of about eighty German and Austrian composers. When Italy became our enemy, the censor's list expanded to some two hundred names.

During the war, my personal affairs altered a great deal. In 1940, my wife, Doris, and I were divorced. I had not seen her since 1938, and I did not attend the legal proceedings. The next year, Peggy Cochrane

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Frankie Howerd (right) with Max Bygraves at the 1950 Royal Command Variety Performance. In the war, both worked for Payne. He paid Howerd £15 a week, but "couldn't see Bygraves going very far"

Anna Neagle broadcast with Payne and his band in 1941. As a gimmick for another programme, Jack invited the Prime Minister to choose a tune. "I'm too busy trying to win a war," said Churchill

Jimmy looked up from his music. The sergeant's voice boomed reproachfully in his ear: "Mr. Wood, sir—we have looked for you everywhere!"

SONG OF THE SECOND LIEUTENANT

by ***JOHN MASTERS***

ILLUSTRATED BY EDWIN PHILLIPS

Now, in the heat of the battle, he had heard it at last. But a voice was screaming: "You fool, sir—you will have us all killed for your music!"

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL PREECE glanced at his watch, and tightened his lips with a small grunt of satisfaction. 10.02 hours, Indian Standard Time, checked by the radio. The parade should have marched off two minutes ago. He'd have that lazy good-for-nothing Wood today all right, and no possible excuse.

He barked a series of commands. The men of the 1st Battalion the Cardiff Fusiliers snapped to attention, sloped arms, turned, and marched out through the barrack gates. The band started playing, and Colonel Preece winced slightly.

As he marched at the head of the battalion, his drawn sword steady in his right hand, his mind wandered back to the miserable Second-Lieutenant James Wood—Jimmy the Dormouse, Jimmy the Frontier Fool—the other subalterns had found plenty of nicknames for him. The boy seemed to be half asleep most of the time, and usually came on duty either late, wrongly dressed—or both. Absent-minded too, or a little weak in the head. One day he'd appeared for bayonet fighting drill carrying a bayonet, but no rifle. The sergeant-major instructing the young officers had turned pale with horror.

"But Mr. Wood, where iss your rifle?"

"My rifle? . . ." a long pause ". . . I haven't got a rifle. Officers don't . . . Do they?"

"No sir, but you could borrow one, like the other officers here."

"You said *bayonet* fighting. . . ."

The sergeant-major had given up with a weary shrug then. Military men who did not know that a bayonet was only used on the end of a rifle were beyond his experience.

The colonel marched like an automaton. Behind him the thousands of buttons twinkled in the hard Frontier glare. His mind wandered on. He'd have to fix Master James Wood properly this time—but what would he do with him? Another reprimand? More threats to have the brigadier force his resignation for inefficiency?

What the boy's father would say and do, heaven knew, but there seemed to be nothing else for it. He had no initiative. He couldn't even think up good excuses—just looked at his watch in a puzzled way and muttered inaudibly under his breath. It would be the same this time.

The boy wouldn't give him a chance to be lenient, wouldn't even say he'd overslept . . . and this was the fifth time in his first month that he'd been absent from duty.

At the door of the church, Preece stood aside to watch his battalion file past him. He scanned them closely as they took off their

"Mr. Wood," snapped the colonel, "the column has been held up by your moony incompetence. You're in open arrest"

big dome-like pith helmets and shuffled into the cool of the church. He'd served twenty-five years with these squat miners from the Welsh valleys and thought he understood them and their queer moody humours. They liked church because of the music, and he knew that many of the men here now were not C. of E. but had come for the singing. In the evening they'd go to the chapel, too, and sing there. He was Welsh himself and wondered suddenly if he was the only Welshman in the world who had no ear for music and whether that lack was responsible for some barrier he had always felt between himself and his fusiliers. Damn it, even young Wood didn't seem to have that trouble, and he was English.

HE blinked. Among the faces filing slowly past he thought for a second he had seen that of Second-Lieutenant Wood. He looked at the slight figure more closely. It *was* Wood, the wide blue eyes innocent, yet perpetually worried; a thin fair moustache struggling for life above his upper lip. The colonel's jaw sagged. The last man passed by.

Preece recovered himself with a start and followed them. He thought the organ was making a terrible noise, but the soldiers sat dreamily listening, so it must be good. They'd be able to say whether it was Bach or Handel, though they couldn't write their names. He'd have to tackle Wood later.

Afterwards, while the soldiers re-formed in the road to march back, he beckoned to the boy.

"You were not on parade in barracks, Mr. Wood."

He made it a cold statement, not a query.

The young man hesitated, then answered softly, "No, sir. . . ." His voice trailed away.

Preece snapped, "But you are here now. How?"

"Bicycle, sir."

"What!"

"I took—borrowed—a bicycle, sir . . . threw it in the ditch. Can I pick it up on the way back, please?"

The colonel opened his mouth, intending to blast Second-Lieutenant Wood to eternity; but the boy looked so worried that he only said curtly, "You may not. And, although this is the first time you've ever shown any initiative, *do—not—do—it—again!* Fall in!"

THE band struck up and the battalion marched away down the scorching road. The ranked searchlights on their tall poles stood up above the barrack roofs. Beyond, the barren road and grey plateau reached to the feet of the mountains. A little snow lay on the crests still, the colonel saw, but it would be like a furnace in the valleys and the lower hills—where the Malik Khel tribe lived.

"Column" tomorrow, against that same Malik Khel. He supposed he'd get used to calling a punitive expedition a "column" when he'd done a few more years on the Frontier.

The music of the band beat at his ears, sounding to him like a continuous caterwaul of bulls and monkeys, but he could hear the fusiliers humming in the ranks, and a few singing out loud. That was no way to behave on a ceremonial parade . . . but let them sing. Next week would be tough.

A gang had murdered the political agent in Malik Khel territory, and stolen twenty thousand rupees he had been taking to pay the levies. Of course the whole tribe knew who had done it, but they refused to surrender them. Warnings were disregarded, and the days of grace gone. The brigadier had given his orders, and tomorrow the column would set out. Soon the Malik Khel would have no village. It would have been destroyed, burned, blown up—no doubt about that; but not without fighting. The fusiliers might get away with

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Arnold Lucas boosts his sales with bandaged knuckles

by RONALD CLARKE

He's tried every trick to sell his stick-on plasters. They've been used on the Everest expedition—and to heal canaries with broken legs

WHEN HE WAS in Liverpool on a sales trip, Arnold Lucas received a telephone call from Aintree where the Grand National had just been run. One of the horses had broken its neck; it had not been shot, for there was a slight chance that it might be saved if its head could be kept rigidly in position for a few hours.

"When I arrived with supplies of elastic adhesive bandage, the horse had been tethered to its box, and had its neck resting on the half-door," says Lucas. "I helped the vet to put on the wide bandages, and the animal was kept in the same position until the following morning, when a large plaster of paris bandage was wrapped round in place of the elastic adhesive. The horse not only recovered; later it won a race."

Lucas's connection with elastic bandages started nearly twenty-five years ago when he was attending a sales meeting of Smith and Nephew Ltd., the company of which he is now a director. "At the time," he says, "I was selling surgical dressings, first aid cabinets, and medicine bottles.

"As I sat in my chair, the chairman of the company came up behind me and slapped a plaster over my right eye. 'What do you think of that, my lad?' he asked."

That plaster, made on a specially woven "elastic" base, was the forerunner of millions of dressings which are now produced by the company every year; they use a hundred miles of cloth and fifty thousand pounds of "adhesive spread" a week, and have been used for such unexpected jobs as mending the 1953 Everest expedition's oxygen equipment, and helping to preserve the coelacanth, the oldest species of fish in the world.

Overcame Prejudice With Egg

Lucas, a solid northcountryman of fifty-nine, with three grown-up daughters, who lives today in the Hertfordshire countryside near the research establishment set up by his firm, quickly saw the wider possibilities of what had been designed mainly for use as an eye-plaster. "In particular," he says, "I realized what a boon it could be to people such as bus conductors and hospital nurses—who might be prone to develop leg trouble but who had to keep on their feet, just the same."

The essence of the new idea was that the plaster was formed not on a rigid "holder" but on an elastic piece of sticky fabric which could hold the plaster even in the most difficult positions. In the early days, there was a good

At London's Charing Cross Hospital, a plaster of paris bandage is put on a fracture. A racehorse at Aintree got this treatment for a broken neck

Experts said that plaster jackets could not be made ready-shaped. Lucas shows how he solved the problem—he cut out paper patterns like these

Micky Woods, a London judo instructor, binds a pupil's ankle with a stretching bandage. Wartime A.T.S. girls wore mittens of this fabric

deal of prejudice against its use, says Lucas. "Even though I did a good deal of my selling with my plaster bandages stuck across non-existent cuts on knuckles or elbows, few clients thought they would really stay put."

One of his tricks was to produce a shining china egg of the kind used by poultry keepers. "There was always an elastic plaster stuck round it," he says, "to show that plaster will stick, even to a round, smooth surface."

Other salesmen had different problems. One man failed to interest doctors at a large London hospital until the day he saw a queue of out-patients waiting to be vaccinated. He removed his jacket and shirt, joined the queue and was vaccinated. Then he produced his plaster, saying: "and this, doctor, is what you want to protect the wound from infection." He made the sale.

As doctors throughout Britain were gradually won over to the idea behind the new bandage, Lucas was put in charge of the medical department set up to handle the growing business. Nowadays he presides over the twelve-man monthly meetings of the company's medical committee.

New uses for the bandage were quickly discovered, an early one being in the treatment of warts. "There was a garage boy in Liverpool whose hands were covered with them," says Lucas. "I suggested one day that he cover one of them with the bandage and see what happened. The surrounding skin, from which the air was excluded, quickly softened, and he was able to remove the wart. Within three months his hands were clear."

Another original use was revealed by a Merioneth schoolmaster who ordered large quantities of narrow-gauge bandage. "I was so intrigued that I drove down to see him," says Lucas. "He told me that he was using the stuff to deal with an outbreak of impetigo." I saw no reason why the bandages should cure it, and told him so. "It doesn't cure the trouble at all," he replied, "it just covers the infection and stops the outbreak from spreading on to towels."

Not only doctors but also vets were soon using the material. Greyhounds frequently lash their tails against the sides of their kennels with enough force to cut the tip of the tail, where there is a delicate blood vessel. "The result," says Lucas, "is that many a dog has raced with a plaster-bound tail."

Greyhound Broke Track Record

A Hull trainer went even farther. He found that a dog which had won more than £1,200 in prize money while under his care, had a badly cut pad two weeks before he was due to recommence training. An elastic plaster stuck firmly to the base of the pad solved the problem, and shortly afterwards the dog broke a track record.

"Cats, horses, and dogs are only some of the animals on which elastic plasters are now regularly used," says Lucas, "and more than one prize canary has had a broken leg mended with the aid of a match-stick splint kept in position with adhesive plaster."

The "stretchiness" of adhesive plaster is achieved by a special twist in the cotton, put in during the spinning process. Careful weaving ensures that these twisted threads can be stretched to a given degree in any specified direction. It is this flexibility which prevents the plaster from curling and rising at the edges, and thus enables it to be worn over the most awkward places. There is, in fact, no elastic in most elastic bandages.

The narrow off-cut of the non-adhesive "elastic" fabric, which was left when the wider material was cut into widths before being spread with the adhesive plaster, was soon in demand for tying parcels and for rug-making.

When the last war came, somebody thought of knitting it into mittens which would cling securely to the hands, yet would offer almost perfect protection to men handling wire ropes on minesweepers. Soon the firm was giving away this "cut-off" together with knitting instructions.

The company organized the collection and dispatch of tens of thousands of "elastic mittens" which were soon being worn not only by men in minesweepers, but also on barrage balloon sites by A.T.S. girls.

"As the use of adhesive dressings became more general," says Lucas, "we began to experiment with a waterproof variety." Hundreds of tests were carried out with the co-operation of a firm of multiple teashops, where the washers-up often cut themselves on knives in the soapy water.

A few months after a thin waterproof base had been devised, the makers found that it was being used for a dozen unexpected purposes. "Many Scottish fishergirls employed on herring-gutting bind their fingers with the waterproof plaster," says Lucas. "They do it not to treat cuts but to prevent them." In the fishing fleets, the trawler men wear wide strips

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JOHN BULL PHOTOGRAPHS BY LAWRENCE HANLEY

As he coasted in, housewives waved, children stared and the old men shout

The smiling village

by ***BRETON AMIS***

ILLUSTRATED BY RICHARD O. ROSE

It was a cheerful, friendly place, eager to give the young reporter all its news. Who would have guessed it held such a secret as this?

AS DISTRICT REPORTER on the *County Argus*, Peter Kemp was a busy young man. In the course of a year he handed his sub-editor the equivalent of nine full length novels chronicling life in the countryside, where his small yellow car buzzed from village to village like a wasp that stung vicars, schoolmasters, postmistresses and publicans into producing newsy items.

He was always in a hurry, except when he swung his car into the long lane leading to Parsley Green. Then, of its own accord it seemed, the engine's splutter and fizz mellowed into a sleepy purr, the wheels revolved slowly. He was able to sit back and pleasurably anticipate his first glimpse of the smiling village.

It was a remote place, the smallest on his round. And, as he knew, there were only two subscribers to the *Argus*—Miss Knott, the schoolmistress, and Mrs. Dellaway, eighty-year-old widow of the last squire of Parsley Green. But the village was a trust bequeathed to him by his predecessor, the venerable Mr. Andrews, and it was a rich inheritance.

To all appearance it was the sleepiest village in the shire, drowsing unchanged through the centuries. This, Peter knew, was deceptive, for at nights Parsley Green was a hive of unusual and intriguing activities.

Where else, for instance, did they play blind man's buff in the dark after harvest supper, or have a hop-skip-jump contest between the two top scorers when the weekly whist drive resulted in a tie, or weave a full-sized Ancient Briton's coracle at the basket-making class?

Peter had tried to get a picture of the coracle, but unfortunately it had been snapped up by the one American tourist who had ever found his way into Parsley Green. A man from Colorado, Miss Knott had reported, connecting him cleverly with a current Colorado beetle scare.

Peter loved Miss Knott, which was safe enough, because she was thirty-five years his senior—a little old village school marm, wispy grey hair looking as if someone had attacked it with garden shears, impudent blue eyes behind gold rimmed glasses, grey woolly jumper, sagging grey skirt. She always had a batch of racily written items for him.

THREE years ago, when old Andrews had introduced them, she had looked Peter carefully up and down, from his sturdy brown brogues to his flaming red hair. "Take him over to the Red Cow, Mr. Andrews," she had said. "You have ten minutes before closing time."

On their return, she had presented them with

to him. Peter knew that whatever happened he could never let them down

an additional paragraph: *"This week Parsley Green welcomed Mr. Peter Kemp, who succeeds Mr. Edward Andrews as 'Argus' reporter. Good luck to the old and the new! During his visit, Mr. Kemp discussed agricultural and social matters with. . . ."* Then followed a list of a dozen or more names.

"They would all be in the Cow at midday closing," Miss Knott had said briskly. "I know your people like names, correctly spelt and in block letters."

After that, Peter couldn't let Parsley Green down, whatever his editor might hint about wasted time and petrol. His Tuesday afternoons were still a thrill when he saw the cluster of wattle-and-thatch cottages rising out of the meadows. They enclosed a small church with a square Norman tower, a pocket-handkerchief green complete with duck pond, a village hall built in 1925 as a memorial to Squire Dellaway by his widow.

Today, as he coasted into Parsley Green, the housewives waved from wide open doors, the old men on the benches under the eaves of the Red Cow called a greeting, the children at play wedged their heads between the iron railings of the schoolyard and stared and grinned at him.

Miss Knott produced her weekly miscellany, covering a jumble-rumble ("Take your choice, Mr. Kemp") sale at the village hall at which there had been an old-gloves-into-new-mittens stall; a folk dance ("Cossack style, this time, with Russian tea served from the urn"); the usual whist drive ("But we allowed cheating and it was a riot"); and including an inspired essay on prize potatoes ("Plenty of names, including King Edward and Arran Banner").

On the subject of names, Miss Knott had a complaint. "You ought to know by now that Mrs. Pettitt is spelt with four t's, Mr. Kemp! Last week your printers lost one of them and Mrs. Dellaway noticed it."

Peter had never met the lady of the manor. Crippled with arthritis, she hadn't left the house for many years, but she knew the full names of every man, woman, and child in the village, and combed his notes for errors. If she found one she sent a mild reproof through Miss Knott, together with a gift of a chicken or a pheasant.

Peter hoped for a pheasant this time. Instead, Miss Knott issued an invitation like a royal command for him to take tea at the manor.

He had imagined Mrs. Dellaway to be an invalid tottering on the brink of the grave, but the slender, gracious woman who received him, in a gilt and chintz room where a huge fire blazed, was brimming over with life. Brown eyes as gay as a girl's gave her delicate, pink and white face an incredible youthfulness.

"Sit down, Mr. Kemp," she said briskly. "I wanted to see you before I die, because the *Argus* has become the link between me and my village. On Fridays I read my Bible, your notes, my mail, in that order. Miss Knott, please ring for tea."

Over it, she talked of herself and Parsley Green.

"When I came here from London in 1901, I thought it was the world's end, Mr. Kemp. The village was fast asleep and so were the people. My husband said it had always been that way, always would be. I took his word for it, and persuaded him we needed a town house as well. But when he died in 1924 I decided that something must be done here."

"Mrs. Dellaway came and did it," Miss Knott put in proudly. "She took Parsley Green by the scruff of the neck and shook it awake. By the time I came I could hardly get into my own school, what with the bazaars and flower shows, basket-making and rabbit breeding classes, dances and whist drives. I complained, so she said she would build a village hall. Within six months we had it."

"And Mrs. Dellaway ought to have a vote of thanks from my paper," Peter told them, smiling. "Size for size, not one of the forty villages I cover can compete with this. You certainly started something!"

The old lady looked pleased. "At first there was opposition," she admitted. "I'd thrown stones in their duck pond and it caused a lot of quacking. But I made them go my way. I wouldn't let them fall asleep again, though I had to pinch hard to keep them awake."

"They loved you for it," Miss Knott assured her. "They still do, although they haven't seen you for years. When Parsley Green falls in love, Mr. Kemp, it is very faithful."

He was able, at length, to leave. Next Tuesday afternoon it rained, and that was unusual, Peter thought, because fair weather generally welcomed him to Parsley Green. He had to stop to put up his hood. Then a tyre blew and he had to change the wheel in rain and mud.

His temper frayed. For the first time he wondered whether he should travel beyond his circuit when new villages were growing up within it. To waste a precious half-hour for the sale of a couple of copies a week was bad business. But he drove on.

In the villages the rain that bounced from the thatches made bead curtains at which the housewives watched and waved. When he left the car, and crossed the glistening ebony asphalt

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Joan Rhodes hides her strength in charm

by JOHN SANDILANDS

With the looks of a mannequin, she twists steel bars, tears phone books in half—or takes on the police at tug-of-war

ONE DAY IN 1950, Joan Rhodes, a blonde with the figure and poise of a mannequin, walked into the office of West End variety agent Solly Black and told him: "I'm a strong woman. I can tear telephone directories, break six-inch nails and bend steel bars. I'd like you to get me some cabaret dates."

Black noticed her well-modulated voice, her neat costume, nylons and high heels—and smiled his disbelief. As a thirteen-stone former professional boxing champion he felt he knew about muscles, and Joan just did not look the part. "It was my mistake," Black recalls. "When she saw my doubts she said politely, 'Excuse me,' picked me up and held me above her head with hardly an effort. I had to ask her to put me down to get her signature on a contract."

Black's reaction to Joan's extraordinary combination of femininity and massive strength was exactly that of millions who have since seen her on television, in films, on club and variety stages in fifteen different countries and even—for one night only—in a prison. There, at a concert, hundreds of prisoners watched as she demonstrated the technique of bending steel bars.

Appearing in expensive Paris evening dresses, she intersperses the twisting of inch-wide steel

Smiling and almost without sign of strain, Joan bends a piece of steel. When a Frenchman accused her of faking her act, she twisted a bar round his neck

JOHN BULL PHOTOGRAPHS BY ARTHUR WHITTINGTON

with amusing patter. To audiences brought up in the tradition of terrifyingly masculine strong women, the contrast is irresistible.

Occasionally, watchers refuse doggedly to believe that she is genuine. Two years ago, in Paris, a diminutive Frenchman followed her about for several days, accusing her of faking her act. Eventually he pursued her to the garage where she borrowed a vice after each performance to straighten her bars. As the insults continued, Joan lost her temper. Seizing a bar, she bent it round his neck like a collar, leaving him to get free as best he could.

Farouk Took The Challenge

To most men her strength provides a challenge they find hard to refuse. When she was appearing at a night club in Vienna recently, two Olympic weight-lifters claimed that they could easily perform any of her feats. Joan asked them to break the six-inch nails she was using in her act. Both failed miserably. Joan succeeded at the first attempt and tore up several local telephone directories as an encore.

Joan has found that tact and a little flattery are the only ways of appeasing injured male pride. Sometimes, however, she has to take stronger measures. In Lisbon she offered £100 to anyone who could break a six-inch nail on stage. Each night for a week a local heavyweight wrestling champion turned up and struggled in vain. On the last night he made a prodigious effort, still without success, and as Joan patted him commiseratingly on the back, he lost his temper and lunged at her. To the audience's delight she threw him heavily with a wrestling hold.

One of the most notable celebrities who has accepted the challenge to match her feats was King Farouk. While she was appearing at a Rome night club in July last year, he watched her act for several nights running and eventually accepted one of the nails that she distributes round the ringside tables. "To my surprise, he insisted on taking it to a private room for his attempt," Joan recalls. "He came back about ten minutes later, having put a faint kink in the metal." Joan congratulated him and gave him a souvenir photograph with the inscription: "A noble effort, your Majesty."

Steel Had Been Doctored

Her act is often the target for humorists in the audience. Once, when she was appearing at a factory in the North of England, she found it impossible to bend her steel bars. The audience began to titter and she noticed that a group of workers sitting in the front row was looking decidedly sheepish. Glancing at the metal she realized, from its colour, that it had been put through a hardening process. Pretending that she needed help, she called the culprits on to the stage and raised a laugh by standing by while they struggled with the toughened steel.

In another show she pitted herself against an entire police team in a tug-of-war. Instead of tugging, the policemen jerked the rope in an effort to gain a quick win. The strain nearly broke Joan's fingers and she let go abruptly, drawing the loudest applause of the day as the opposition collapsed in a heap.

The secret of Joan's abnormal strength has baffled several experts. Her measurements—height, 5 feet 6 inches; bust, 36 inches; waist, 23 inches; hips, 36 inches—are those of a model. She has none of the bulging muscles of the professional strong woman, and has done little formal strength training.

Mickey Wood, the physical culture expert, who coached Joan in ju-jutsu and weight-lifting at his Soho gymnasium, says of her: "She is a natural strength athlete, with enormous power in her shoulders and forearms. With intensive training many women could develop the same power, but to her it is a gift."

Joan herself is modest about her achievements. "With perseverance anybody could do the same," she claims. "When I first attempted to tear telephone directories I kept at it until my hands were raw and bleeding. After months of practice I found the knack in one explosive effort. Without the knack, strength is little use."

Her impulsive energy has to be carefully curbed. In Glasgow, recently, she arrived at the theatre only a few minutes before she was due on stage and found she had left her dressing-room key behind. The theatre manager was so impressed by the ease with which she splintered the thick door that he refused to let her pay for the damage.

Even as a child, Joan was unusually strong. Her sister, Mrs. Elizabeth Stone, recalls that at the South London school which they both attended, Joan was constantly in trouble through her playground habit of throwing older and heavier pupils about and lifting prefects bodily over her head.

Her high spirits were too much for the school and she was asked to leave. At thirteen she found no outlet for her bounding energy in London and ran away from home to join a travelling circus, adding several years to her age. After a spell as a trapeze artist she was given the job of helping the strong man with his equipment. One day, when he was suffering from a severe muscle strain, she pleaded to be allowed on instead. To everyone's surprise she pulled off some of the strong man's best tricks.

Surprised The Strong Man

When she left the circus she got a job in a London café popular with street performers. One day a husky street strong man jokingly suggested that she should try to bend one of his six-inch nails. Blushing under the smiles of the customers, Joan strained and, in a stunned silence, broke it in half.

Encouraged by this success she became a street performer herself. Her youthful appearance helped her, and for months she made a good living with her strong girl act.

Her trim figure also brought her modelling jobs, and in 1947 she appeared in the Lord Mayor's Show as a javelin thrower, shivering all the way down the route in a brief costume.

In 1949 Joan got her first chance of working up the act that has now brought her success. Spotting a triple advertisement for show girls, dancers and freaks, she applied for all three jobs and was signed up as a strong girl in the Pete Collins show, "Would You Believe It?"

As part of her act she nightly lifted thirty-two stone Ted Evans on her shoulders. "After a few weeks the manager told me to leave the trick out," Joan recalls. "I told him I could manage it quite easily. He replied, 'I know. It's Evans who is complaining about the strain.'"

Weekly Offers Of Marriage

For a year she appeared all over England, working her way through hundreds of London telephone directories, and snapping more than seven pounds of nails a week. One of her present difficulties is the shortage of the old, fat London phone books. Soon she will have to turn to the classified business directory, nearly a quarter as thick again.

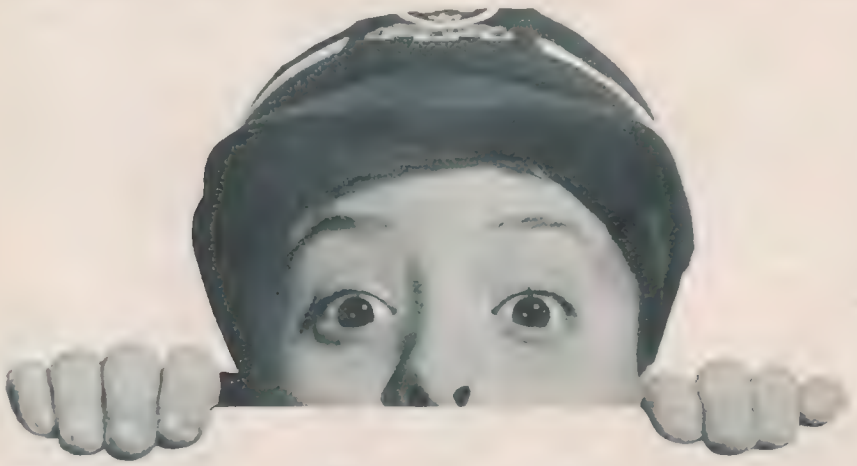
Joan's appearances, especially on television, bring her a large fan-mail, including several proposals of marriage each week. So far she has accepted none, but her good looks and intelligence—she speaks French, Spanish and German—ensure that she has plenty of men friends.

Whenever possible she keeps her stage activities secret. She can never be certain of people's reactions to her job.

One boy friend knew nothing of her strong arm career until he took her to a West End cinema, where the supporting features included a short film about her. "I sank lower and lower in my seat as the film continued," she remembers regretfully, "but he eventually realized it was me. He took me home politely enough—but I never saw him again." THE END

Watched from behind to ensure that her act is genuine, Joan rips up a phone book. "It's a knack," she says. "All it takes is practice"

Seventeen-stone comedian Issy Bonn is lifted off the stage. At school, Joan was always in trouble for hoisting prefects above her head



Munchmallows for tea!

On with the Kettle. Out with the cups.
We've got Munchmallows for tea!
Lush milk chocolate, crispy biscuit, the squashiest mallow ever . . . . . .

Gosh, how we love Munchmallows!

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THE SMILING VILLAGE

Continued from page 29

of the school play-yard, Miss Knott came to the porch with the usual bundle of notes in her hand.

He saw at once that she had been crying. "Mrs. Dellaway is dead," she said briefly. "It happened last night, in her sleep. I've written you a little piece the villagers would like. They pass my copy of the *Argus* round."

Peter didn't know what to say. It seemed wrong to be sad over the death of a very old little lady, yet he knew a light had gone out in Parsley Green.

"I'm sorry, Miss Knott," he said at last. "I'll come over and cover the funeral."

"She would like that," the schoolmistress said. "She liked you. Everyone here does."

The funeral, with a list of mourners that included all the names he knew so well, filled the first column of the district news. After a wordy battle, the editor had given way, puzzled.

"You're a queer cove, Peter. This is your own wreath, isn't it—verbal instead of floral? All right, but you'd better play down on Parsley Green for a while. We're giving your Mrs. Dellaway more space than the late-lamented Lord Lieutenant of the County."

"In her corner of it she did more than he ever did," Peter said shortly.

The following week he drove into Parsley Green in brilliant sunshine. Outwardly, nothing had changed—the wives waved, the old men called a greeting, the children stared and smiled—but he knew the change was there. He was almost prepared for it when Miss Knott told him there were no notes.

"I simply hadn't the heart, Mr. Kemp, after her death. Besides, nothing has happened."

"Try to find a paragraph or two for next week," he suggested. "If you drop out of the news, I won't have any excuse for visiting my favourite village."

But it was the same the next week, and the next. Miss Knott was growing old, he realized. He might have to drop Parsley Green from his round after all.

THE prospect hurt. He glanced across the green to the grey-brick façade of the village hall. "Haven't you started the whist drives again, or the dances?" he queried. "I'm sure Mrs. Dellaway would want them to go on. And what about the evergreen decorations you were planning for the pensioners' party?"

Miss Knott sighed. She took an iron key from the schoolhouse porch. "Come and see for yourself," she invited. "You've never been inside the hall, have you?"

She led the way across the green. Ducks from the pond waddled after them, and the old men on the inn's benches watched with benevolent, smiling interest. She had some trouble with the key, so Peter turned it in the lock for her, and stepped inside.

He found himself staring up at the blue sky. The rubble of what had been the roof made a mound amid the broken, water-rotted floorboards. The hall was nothing more than a shell enclosing rubbish.

Miss Knott met his astonished gaze. "Our one wartime incident," she said. "It happened on the night of a big blitz, so no one was in the least bit interested. Old Mr. Andrews kept it out of the *Argus*. We all agreed that Mrs. Dellaway must not hear of it."

"But the whist drives!" Peter exclaimed. "The jumble sales, the flower shows——"

"I doubt if any of the villagers have played whist for a dozen years," Miss Knott said, quite brightly. "As for flower shows—they mostly grow vegetables. I *am* glad to get this off my conscience, Mr. Kemp. Of course, I'm very sorry, but we had to protect Mrs. Dellaway."

Peter left the hall and stood in the sunshine. "You mean you invented those notes? Every week, for three years, I've been feeding my page with events that never took place?"

"Mr. Andrews did it for much longer than that," the schoolmistress murmured. "We loved her."

Peter felt his temper rising. "But not enough to claim war damage and have the roof repaired?"

She made a little gesture of regret. "The villagers didn't want it repaired," she confessed. "They went her way because they were fond of her, but they always preferred their own. The women spend most of their spare time in one another's cottages, the men at the inn, and everyone is content. They don't seem to need a community centre."

"Blind man's buff!" Peter accused. "Hop-skip-jump for prizes! Cossack dances and Russian tea——"

MISS KNOTT had the grace to blush. "I'm sorry, Mr. Kemp. At first the notes were a conspiracy with Mr. Andrews to keep Mrs. Dellaway happy. Then you came along, so young and eager for really interesting news that I had to give them some colour."

"In the last three years you've brought me a thousand or so miles out of my way to fill column after column of the *Argus* with fabrications that amount to downright lies," he said bitterly. "What am I supposed to tell my editor?"

"Nothing." She put a small hand on his arm, her bird-bright gaze on his angry face. "You can't undo the good we've done, because she is dead, so—just say nothing. The villagers will keep the secret. They would never harm anyone they liked, and they have a fine sense of fun."

"A conspiracy of silence, this time!" Peter growled.

"Will you forgive us?"

He felt there was a lot he should say about his favourite village with its sense of humour and its amazing schoolmistress, but he found himself laughing—a little wryly.

"It's no use pretending, Miss Knott—you aren't really sorry. Nor am I, perhaps, but I can't forgive you for tampering with the integrity of the press."

"From now on I shall write only the truth," she promised. "The whole truth and nothing but——"

"Let's leave it at nothing," Peter said firmly. "I wouldn't believe a line you wrote." He held out his hand. "Goodbye, Miss Knott. You're right, you know. A village doesn't need a hub while it has a heart."

They smiled at one another and parted as friends. The old men waved him on his way, the wives were still at their doors.

From the bend in the lane he had a last look at the village. Peacefully, blissfully, it had settled down to sleep again. It would go on sleeping because there was no one to throw stones in the duck pond.

He would never come back. THE END

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REQUIEM FOR A WREN

Continued from page 15

log fire, wearing a long, black evening dress with a shawl round her shoulders. We stood warming ourselves, for the evening was turning chilly, and drinking a pink gin while we chatted about London and about Helen; then I went up to my room to change. In my bedroom somebody had lit a fire and left a huge basket of gum-tree logs, scenting the air with the fragrance of the burning eucalypt. Somebody, perhaps old Annie, had unpacked one suitcase and had laid out my evening clothes upon the bed.

It struck me, as I unpacked my other suitcase in my old, familiar room, savouring all my old belongings, that I would be the only person sleeping on the upper floor of the main house that night, since my father and mother now slept on the ground floor. On the other side of the corridor to their old room was the corner room that had been Helen's and was now a spare room, and next to that and separated by the second bathroom was the guest bedroom, empty tonight, of course.

Next to my room there was another bathroom, and opening from that was Bill's room, very seldom used now. Bill had been killed off Normandy in the spring of 1944; by the time I got back to Coombargana my father and mother had taken all Bill's possessions and pictures out and had refurnished and redecorated the room as a second guest room, thinking perhaps that too intimate a reminder of Bill and the war in Europe would have been bad for me.

Nothing of Bill remained there now, but they had forgotten the bathroom. Since 1946 I had never sat in that bath without glancing at the door into Bill's room with the thought that it would open and he would come striding in, seventeen or eighteen years old, with little or no clothes on.

That happened to me again that evening as I bathed before dressing for dinner. Bill was still a very real person in my life, though nine years had gone by since I had met him last, at Lymington, in Hampshire, and sixteen years since we had shared that bathroom. One does not easily forget one's only brother.

As I sat in the bath thinking of these things and enjoying the benison of hot water after days of travel, I felt a little lonely up there on the first floor by myself. I was not quite alone, of course. Beyond the stairs and the gallery that overlooked the big central hall of the house lay the servants' wing over the kitchen quarters, their bedrooms separated from those of the main house by a swing door. There were four servants' bedrooms there, relic of the days of more plentiful domestic service, and in one of these Annie, our old cook, would be sleeping that night. In another would be the house-parlourmaid. . . .

My mother and father were waiting for me in the drawing-room when I went down. I had another pink gin with my father, and then dinner was announced. Mrs. Plowden, who helped out in emergencies, put her head in at the door. Her sleeves were rolled to the elbow and she wore a coarse apron of hessian. She said brightly: "It's all in, on the table, Mrs. Duncan." My mother thanked her, and she withdrew.

I saw my mother glance at my father, and caught his glance in return. Things must have been different in the days of the parlourmaid.

We went into the dining-room. To me, the bare, polished table with the lace mats and the silver was well laid, but to my mother, everything was in the wrong place, and she hobbled about rearranging salt cellars and wine glasses, moving dishes from the table to the sideboard, till the arrangement was as she was used to having it. "I'm afraid everything's a bit higgledy-piggledy tonight, Alan," she said. "We'll get things organized in a few days."

I said: "It looks all right to me, Mum."

She said quietly: "I suppose the fact of the matter is that we've been spoiled for the last year or so. I'd almost forgotten what it was to have to train somebody to do things nicely."

"She was good, was she?"

My mother said: "She was an educated girl, so one only had to show her how to do a thing once. I think she must have come from a good home, where they lived nicely."

"She got to know our ways," my father said.

My mother nodded. "It will be a very long time before we find another girl like Jessie."

We seemed to have drifted back on to the difficult subject. I cast about hurriedly for something fresh to tell my mother that would take her mind off the dead parlourmaid, but I seemed to have told her most of the things already. The thought of Bill came into my mind and the new details I had learned about his death, but I rejected this hurriedly as a subject that had better wait for another time. My journey home was something that I had not told her of, that might amuse and interest her and take her mind off the more sombre topic.

"I stayed four or five days in New York," I said. "It's a stimulating place, but I don't know that I'd like to work there."

I CARRIED on talking about the United States, and the topic lasted us all through dinner. Afterwards we went through to the drawing-room. When I had lived at home before, after the war, I had frequently played a game of chess with my mother after dinner; I had not played since then and I had all but forgotten the moves, but now to take her mind off our troubles I suggested we might have a game to celebrate my return.

We played two games and then it was half past nine and time for them to be in bed. I put the things away and helped my mother up out of her chair.

"It seems terribly early to be going to bed on your first evening," she said. "I feel rather badly about it, Alan, but it's what Dr. Stanley says we've got to do, especially because your father gets up so early."

My father said: "Help yourself to a whisky, Alan. And here's the paper."

I smiled. "Don't worry about me. I'll probably take to going off early myself in a few days, and getting up early. It's the best way in the country."

I walked with my mother as she hobbled slowly to the door. In the hall as we walked together to her room she said: "It *is* good to have you home again, Alan. You don't know how we've been looking forward to you coming." She paused. "It's really getting too much for your father now. And then this trouble. . . ."

"Don't worry about that, Mum," I said. "It'll all be over in a few days now."

"Yes, I suppose so," she said quietly. She hobbled on a step or two, and then she said: "Jessie must have been feeling so terribly unhappy to take her own life, and I had no idea of it. If she was unhappy, I should have known about it, and I didn't."

"Don't worry about it, Mother," I repeated. "It's nothing to do with you. We all think it was an accident."

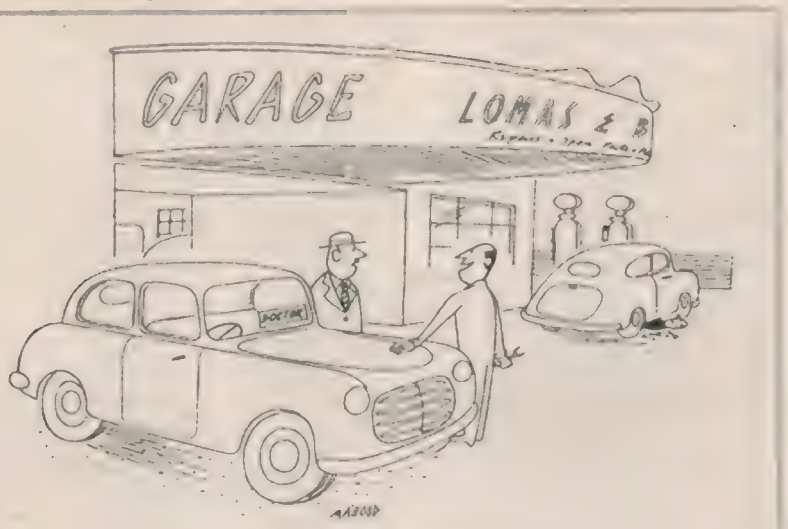
"Perhaps it was. But I wish I could really think so."

We reached her door. "Good night, Mother," and I kissed her.

She held me for a moment. "Good night, Son. I am so very, very glad you're home."

When my father and mother had gone to bed, I went back to the drawing-room and stood for a moment before the fire, deep in thought. This matter of the parlourmaid was evidently worrying my mother very much indeed, and the more I thought about it the more inexplicable it seemed. Whatever the reasons had been that had made the girl take her own life, it had been deliberate, or she would not have destroyed her documents and letters. I wondered what she had done with them.

The thought of murder crossed my mind, of course, and I put it out of



"Would you like a second opinion?"

my head. Nothing suggested any conceivable motive for murder in this instance, nor any possibility of it in Coombargana House.

Annie might know something that she had not told my parents, and it was time that I saw Annie, anyway. Annie had been at Coombargana before I was born. She came from some village near Peterhead, in Scotland. I think my grandfather knew her father, old McConchie, as a boy, or perhaps he met him when he went home in 1895. In any case, Annie came out to work for my grandfather when she was probably about twenty years of age.

I wondered if she was still up. I left the drawing-room and went through the dining-room; the light was still on in the kitchen. I opened the swing door and there she was, standing by the table.

"Evening, Annie," I said. "How are you today?" She was not much changed, a little smaller perhaps, and the grey hair a little thinner.

"I'm fine," she said. "How have you been keeping? It's good to see you home again, Mr. Alan."

"I'm very well," I said. "Very glad to be home."

"Aye," she said. "There's no doubt about it, your own place is the best. How do you find your father and mother, Mr. Alan?"

"Not too good. I didn't realize that they were getting so old."

"Ah well," she said, "we none of us get any younger."

"I think this trouble today may have upset my mother." I leaned back against the bright steel sink. "I don't understand why she did it. Was she unhappy, do you think?"

"I would not say so," she replied. "Very quiet she was, these last two or three days. But then, she was always quiet."

"Do you know if she was in the habit of taking things to make her sleep?" I asked. "Was she a girl who took a lot of medicines?"

She shook her head. "There's a bottle of fruit salts on her washstand and a tube of aspirin. Then there was the bottle by her bedside, that the doctor took away."

"You don't know what those sleeping-tablets were?"

"I do not, Mr. Alan."

"And there were no letters or papers in her room?"

"Not a scrap."

I glanced at her. "That's very extraordinary, because she must have had some papers. She must have had a passport to come from England. What's happened to that?"

She shrugged her shoulders. "Maybe she got rid of everything when she decided to make an end to herself."

"You think she did decide to do it, Annie? You don't think it was an accident?"

"It's not for me to say, Mr. Alan. But if it was an accident there would be papers or letters of some kind, I would think."

I thought for a minute. "Where could she have burned things, Annie?"

"In the coke boiler, out behind," she said. She meant the central-heating boiler. "She could have burned them there."

"Without anybody knowing?"

"Oh, aye. It gets made up in the morning, and at midday, and at night, but in between times nobody goes there."

I stood in silence for a time, thinking. Then I looked at her. "Is there really nothing, nothing at all among her things, to tell us who she was? No ornaments, or lockets . . . anything?"

She shook her head. "Would you like to have a look inside her room, Mr. Alan?"

I hesitated, reluctant. It seemed an invasion of the dead girl's privacy to go into her room to try to find out things she evidently preferred to keep from us.

"It's a bad thing to intrude unless you've got some very good reason," I said. "But I think perhaps I ought to have a look."

"I'll come up with you," she said.

We went out to the back lobby and up the bare, scrubbed backstairs to the servants' bedrooms. Annie led the way to the second door on the left. It was a room that looked out in the same direction as my own. Bill's room and the bathroom lay between my own room and that of the dead girl.

I asked: "Did you hear anything unusual last night, Annie?"

She shook her head. "Nothing at all."

She paused for a moment, and then opened the door and switched the light on, and we went into the bedroom. It was furnished adequately but simply. On the bed a sheet was stretched over the dead girl.

On the table was a small, folding, travelling alarm clock of an American make, and a bottle of fountain-pen ink. With letters and documents in the forefront of my mind, I unscrewed the top of this bottle; the top came off readily, the bottle was half full. I turned to Annie. "Had she got a pen?" Instinctively I spoke in a low tone, as if in a church.

"Aye," she said. "I saw a pen in her bag." She opened the left-hand small drawer of the chest of drawers and took out rather a worn, fairly large bag of dark-blue leather. She opened it and picked out the pen. The ink was still fresh in the nib. It had been used for writing very recently.

I put it back in the bag and examined the remainder of the contents. There was a compact, a purse with a little money in it, the usual things that a woman carries round with her, but no papers. I glanced at the contents of the drawer, mostly handkerchiefs and stockings; they conveyed nothing to me.

I came back to the purse and opened it again. "What did she do with her money?" I asked. "Surely this isn't all she had?"

Annie shook her head. "She had a

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savings bank account in the Post Office, Mr. Alan."

"Where's the book for that?"

She shook her head. "I have not seen it, Mr. Alan, and I was here when the police made the search."

There were three books on the chest of drawers, but they told me nothing except that her tastes were varied. I looked for a Bible or a Prayer Book, and found neither.

Annie asked: "Do you want to see the clothes, Mr. Alan?" and put her hand on the first drawer.

I shrank instinctively from the intrusion. "There's nothing there, is there? You've turned them over?"

"Aye. The police, they went through everything very carefully."

"Leave them be," I said. I turned from the chest of drawers and looked around the room. Two suitcases lay one on top of the other in a corner. I moved over and examined them. Both were empty and without labels. "Is this all the luggage she had?" I asked.

ANNIE hesitated. "I *think* it is," she said. "I mind she had to make several journeys when she came here first, carrying her luggage from the outside door up to this room. She wouldn't want to carry more than one of these up the stairs at a time. Maybe she went up and down twice only. It's a while ago since she came, and I was cooking at the time and didn't notice her particularly."

I stood, looking round the room. There was nothing to stay for, nothing to be learned. I moved towards the door. Annie paused by the bed, and said in a low tone: "Would you want to look at her?" Her hand moved towards the sheet.

I shook my head: there was nothing to be gained by that, and we had done enough intruding. "Leave her be. There wasn't any locket, or anything under the pillow?"

She shook her head. "Nothing of that, Mr. Alan. We looked carefully when the police were here."

I went out into the corridor, and she followed me. "Well, thanks, Annie," I said. "It'll be a good thing when all this is over and we can get back to having things normal."

She nodded. "Aye. It's been upsetting for everybody."

I nodded. "Well, good night, Annie. Thank you for showing me."

"Oh, that's nothing," she said. "Good night, Mr. Alan."

I went through the swing door to the main house and then downstairs, at my slow pace, to get a whisky before going up to bed. I poured myself a drink and went and stood in front of the dying embers of the drawing-room fire.

I was still glad to be home again, but my pleasure was swamped and tempered by this matter of the dead parlourmaid, so that I could think of nothing else. In this comfortable, homely atmosphere, there had been a deep and secret trouble that nobody had known anything about, so deep that it had led a girl who seemed to have been normal and balanced in her mind to take her own life.

It was incongruous at Coombargana, where troubles had always been small troubles. Nothing like this had ever happened there before, and it was disturbing that it should have happened now. Was something very wrong in all these easy, comfortable surroundings, something that nobody suspected, something that we none of us knew anything about? I felt that I would very much like to know the answer to that one. In fact, it was my duty to find out.

How carefully planned, how deliberate it had all been, how certain she had been in all the movements leading to her death! Practically nothing that was personal to her was left behind. She had cleaned out her life as one might clean out a house or a bed-sitting-room before leaving it, and, having done so, she had laid down to die.

In any normal person, some enormous emotional upset would have accompanied the sum of all these sacrifices, and yet apparently there had been nothing of the sort. By all accounts, if she had planned her death, she had gone to it cheerfully, with a quiet and easy mind.

How could she have been certain of her death? There are ways of committing suicide that really are certain, but taking sleeping-tablets isn't one of them. How could she possibly have been so sure of death as to get rid of everything by burning in the furnace?

IT occurred to me that if she hadn't been certain of her death she might have hidden her things, so that she could regain them, if, in fact, she survived the sleeping-tablets. I had assumed, after talking to Annie, that she had burned everything, but there was not a scrap of evidence that she had done anything of the sort.

With Annie in my mind, the question of the suitcases came forward again. Annie had been vaguely puzzled that there were only two suitcases in her room. Perhaps, in fact, there had been a third. Perhaps she had packed into that third suitcase all that she valued of her personal possessions and deposited it somewhere where she could get it if she did survive.

She could not possibly have taken a suitcase out of the house without someone noticing and commenting upon it. If she had hidden her belongings in a suitcase, it would probably still be in Coombargana House.

I poured myself another drink, and sat down in my father's chair beside the dying fire. This needed thinking

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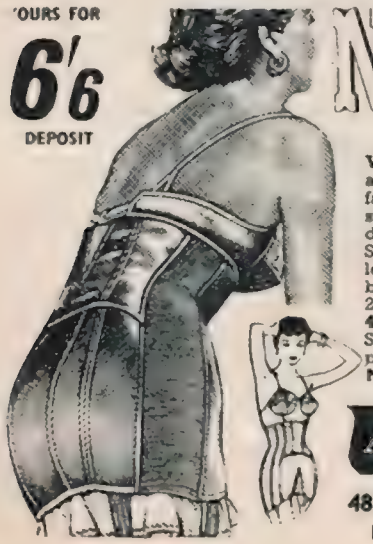

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about. Suppose the girl had wanted to hide a suitcase in the house, where would she put it? It had to be where nobody would think of looking, somewhere accessible to her, where nobody would see her as she went to hide it.

That seemed to mean the whole of the top floor. When Annie was in the kitchen, the whole top floor of the house was hers to do what she liked with. Her case could be in any of the cupboards or closets, in any of the bedrooms. Downstairs would be far more difficult with Annie and my parents about.

Where would she be most likely to hide a suitcase if she wanted to do so? There were the two empty servants' bedrooms opposite her room and Annie's; those, I knew, were used as lumber-rooms or boxrooms now. A suitcase in among a pile of our own ancient, disused cases would lie there for years covered in dust, till in the future someone, clearing out the room, might find this one and puzzle over what was in it, when the very name of Jessie Proctor had been long forgotten.

The more I thought of it, the more convinced I became that her belongings might be just across the corridor from her room. It was the rational and reasonable place for them to be.

I LEFT the drawing-room and made my way upstairs through the silent house. I looked in at my own room and fetched a small electric torch from the dressing-table; I never travel without one of those. Then I went out into the corridor and passed through the swing door into the servants' quarters. I opened the door opposite the dead girl's room. My torch showed me the light switch, and I turned it on.

It was a bedroom, furnished sparsely as a servant's room. Except for the furniture, it was completely empty. I opened the wardrobe door and all the drawers in turn and looked round for a cupboard which wasn't there. There was nothing in that room, at any rate.

There was the other bedroom, the one opposite Annie's room. I went along the corridor and opened the door of that one. This was the room I remembered, the one used as a boxroom. There were beds dismantled and stacked by the wall, trunks, suitcases, garden furniture, deck and steamer chairs, beach umbrellas, curtain poles of an antique design, an old commode, spears, boomerangs and woomeras, and all the junk that a country house accumulates throughout the years. I stood looking at all this stuff, wondering where to begin my search.

There was movement in the room behind me, Annie's room, and a light switched on and showed under the door. I stood, cursing and embarrassed, in the door of the lumber-room, till Annie came out of her room, dressed in a faded blue dressing-gown, with wisps of thin grey hair hanging to her shoulders. "It's all right, Annie," I said, a little testily. "I was just taking a look in here."

She said: "Oh—I'm sorry, Mr. Alan. I heard a noise and wondered what it was." She made a movement to withdraw into her room, and then she paused, and said: "Were you looking for anything in particular?"

I hesitated. "It just crossed my mind that the girl might have had another suitcase, and that it might be in here."

"I do not think so, Mr. Alan," she replied. "I looked this afternoon."

I stared at her; we had evidently been thinking along the same lines. "You did?"

"Aye," she said. "After the police went away, it came into my mind she could have packed some of her things away and put them in this room. I had a good turnout this afternoon."

There was nothing, then, for me to do in there. I turned and closed the door behind me. "Very thoughtful of you, Annie," I said. I turned up the corridor. "Well, good night. Sorry I disturbed you."

"Good night, Mr. Alan."

I went back to my room, and lit a cigarette. I sat there, smoking and wondering about places where a suitcase could be hidden, and then it seemed to me that possibly the boxroom wasn't such a good place after all. It was too obvious. Perhaps she had been cleverer than that.

There was only one other likely place, and that was in the roof. I had been up into the roof once or twice years ago. It was reached by a trap in the ceiling outside Helen's room.

It would be very dirty up there, and I was in my evening clothes. I went back into my room and put on an old pair of trousers and a pullover, and slipped the torch into my pocket.

THERE was a light ladder on the wall of the servants' corridor, kept there as a means of escape in case of fire, and, with the aid of that, getting up into the roof wasn't too difficult. When I was up there I looked around and there was nothing unusual to be seen: various tanks and water-pipes, and brick chimneys, and electrical conduits.

I hesitated to stand up and walk upon the planks, laid loose on the rafters above the plaster ceiling, and crawled along on hands and knees till in the end I found what I was looking for. It stood upon the rafters behind one of the tanks and in an angle formed by the brickwork of a chimney, a little shadowed place where it might have rested for fifty years and never come to light. It was a small suitcase, fairly new and free from dust or dirt. It had the initials "J. P." embossed on the lid, and it was locked.

I climbed down out of the roof with the case, closing the trap-door behind me. I replaced the ladder on the wall and took the case to my room.

I knew where the key was, of course. There had been three keys on a ring in her bag, but I was reluctant to go back into her room to take them from her. I had a bunch of keys of my own, and I tried all these in turn.

None of them would fit. There was nothing for it; with a heavy heart, I went back through the swing door and opened the door into her room. It seemed a despicable thing that I was doing. The girl had been in trouble and now she was dead and could no longer defend herself; I had all but breached her privacy and now I was robbing her bag, to find out things

WHO'S WHO?

They look alike, but their lives have been very different. From the jumbled details below, can you provide each man with his potted biography—and his name? The answers are on page 40.

BORN:
A. Seventy-seven years ago in Cowley, Oxfordshire, son of an accountant.
B. Sixty-six years ago in Calcutta, India, son of a clergyman.

FIRST JOB:
C. A reporter.
D. A mechanic.

HAS SAID:
E. "I just want to pass out feeling that I have done my best for mankind."
F. "To meet the challenge of our time it is more than ever necessary that our whole industrial effort be directed to the common purpose of making war on want."

FAMOUS FOR:
G. His contribution to motoring and medical research.
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that she wanted to keep from us.

Standing by the chest of drawers, opening her bag, I imagined I could feel the horror and the protest from the girl beneath the sheet upon the bed behind me. I whispered: "My dear, I'm sorry to be doing this to you," and took the keys, and thrust the bag back into the drawer, and got out of her room as quickly as I could.

I was a little shaken and upset, and not at all sure that I was doing the right thing. I went slowly downstairs to the drawing-room. There were still red embers in the grate and warmth in the room, and I poured myself another whisky and soda to steady my nerves. The clock struck eleven while I was doing so.

I stood in front of the fire, glass in hand, recovering my self-possession. I was intensely reluctant to open that case. To do so would clearly be to act in opposition to the dead girl's earnest wish. The law might require me to do so, but I had the power to tell the law to go jump in the lake, for nobody but I knew that the case existed. There was no evidence that the slightest harm would come to anybody if I took that suitcase now and thrust it deep into the central heating furnace.

On the other hand, I was responsible for the happiness and well-being of everybody in our little community, so far as lay within my power. Among our little party there had been enormous, catastrophic grief that had made this girl take her life. Unless I knew what it was, that grief might come again.

It might be something that did not affect Jessie Proctor alone. It might be something to be rooted out of Coombargana, some evil that had grown up with the ageing of my father and relaxation of the firmness of control. We might have got a sadist or a pervert of some kind on the property. It was my job to open up that case and see if I could find out what the trouble had been.

"Gently on the accelerator, gently . . ."

I WENT up to my room again presently, with a quiet mind. There was nothing now to wait for; I shut the door carefully behind me and turned the key in the lock. Then I went over to the fireside and opened the case upon the table with one of the girl's keys.

It was full of papers of all sorts, neatly arranged. There were letters and bank books, and about a dozen quarto manuscript books at the bottom. I shuffled through the things on top, and then her passport caught my eye. I pulled it out, and stood dumbfounded by the name upon the cover. I opened it and had a little difficulty in turning the pages, for my fingers were all thumbs. I stared at the photograph that stared back from the page at me, the broad, square, kindly face that I remembered so well, the bushy dark eyebrows.

This wasn't Jessie Proctor. It was Janet Prentice.

Leading Wren Janet Prentice, whom I had met with Bill in April, 1944, at Lymington, in Hampshire, before the invasion of Normandy.

To be continued next week

"Requiem For A Wren" is abridged from the novel by Nevil Shute which Heinemann will publish in book form on April 4, at 12s. 6d.

SONG OF THE SECOND LIEUTENANT

Continued from page 25

twenty or thirty casualties if they were lucky.

Preece calculated briefly with the professional soldier's detachment. This was his job, his trade—but he was Welsh, too. He looked round suddenly. Who would be among the twenty or thirty? Little Williams there? Fusilier Matthew? Himself?

From the corner of his eye he saw a bicycle in the ditch. It lay upside down, wheels askew and pointing at the sky, just where a hurried subaltern had hurled it. A smile twitched under the iron-grey bristles of Preece's moustache. A most unheard-of way of joining a church parade of the Cardiff Fusiliers! The young man must have *something* to him.

He looked again. It was his own bicycle. He took a deep breath, and the brick-red colour climbed above the tightness of his tunic and spread up over the back of his neck so that, five paces behind him, Fusilier Matthew stopped humming and thought: *Indeed, the poor Wood child will not be with us long. He iss a fool.* But he did not say who he meant.

SECOND-LIEUTENANT Jimmy Wood stood in a trance on the hill top. Thorn scratches scarred his bare knees, and the khaki drill shorts that had once been starched and knife-creased now flapped crumpled and torn round his thighs. A thousand feet below, the endless column of men, mules and camels writhed slowly forward along the valley floor. Dust rose in a cloud over it, and blew gently away in the eddies of a slow wind.

The wind seemed to come from hidden furnaces in the southern hills, and Jimmy took off his helmet to let the perspiration dry in his thick hair. The near rocks and scrub glared white, the shadows hard black under them. The men of his platoon shifted uncomfortably about to keep the stones from burning them as they lay stretched and watchful behind rifle and Vickers gun.

He turned his back on the valley, and looked out to the north. Gorge and cliff and sharp ridge stretched away in savage silence, doubly pitiless under the pitiless sun. To the east, in the direction the column was headed, the loop-holed towers of Pinzakot, Malik Khel's tiny capital, rose out of a small plateau. He hoped there would be no fighting. This wasn't his life.

He had been intended for the navy, but his eyes had proved too weak. The old admiral, his father, had swallowed his disappointment, and he had gone instead to Sandhurst. It hadn't been worth resisting—not then, when he'd been seventeen, and not sure of what he wanted.

No, he hoped they wouldn't start fighting. Was that cowardly? Perhaps he was a coward after all, as well as being a little cracked, like Colonel Preece said.

The wind shook the spiny leaves of the holly oaks on the mountain crest, and made a soughing in the stones. He jerked his head up sharply. That was it! That tone of unquiet expectancy there, that's what he'd been striving after! He moved his head in time with a slow inward rhythm. His brain raced after the thin melody that always ran ahead, just round the corner, and would not be heard properly. Eight signal pads, covered with scribbled staves, lay tucked away in his box in barracks, but he hadn't caught the melody yet. This was better, though, out here in the quiet, under that expectant, drawling, burning wind.

He slipped behind a rock, into the dense shadow of a pair of holly oaks growing together, and sat down. Fumbling quickly in the haversack at his side, he pulled out a signal pad and began to scribble quickly with a pencil stub.

The sun moved slowly across the horizon. . . .

The voice boomed loud and reproachful in his ear: "*Mister* Wood, sir—we haff looked for you efferywhere!"

He snapped the pad shut quickly, and looked up. Glue flowed into his racing brain. It slowed down, stopped, reversed, began slowly and painfully to move again. He said, "Oh yes . . . Sergeant Jones . . . what for?"

"We haff the order to retire twenty-five minutes ago, sir."

"Oh yes . . . then we'd better go?"

"Go? Indeed we had better, Mister Wood."

THE dark sergeant ran off, yelling orders in a metallic tenor, making them sound like an operatic aria. Jimmy felt the men's impatience, but felt too that there was a queer sympathy mixed with it, as though they soon expected to see him hanged or shot. He must have done something terrible this time.

The platoon trotted down the hill at the double, rifles, haversacks, and bayonet scabbards bouncing and jerking. The dust in the valley had settled. No one could have been moving for a long time. The usual cluster of orderlies and staff officers was gathered at the colonel's command group. They looked tiny down there, but the fluttering flags of the signallers and the huge red flag that marked the tail of the column were easy to pick out. Faint in the east he thought he heard a pop-popping. How long had that been going on?

He'd lost the elusive melody again, but only for a time. He had it by the foot now, and if he could concentrate for two or three hours, he'd have it again, and write it down.

Colonel's Preece's face was white with anger, his dark eyes suffused and furious. "Mr. Wood. what is the meaning of this?"

He couldn't think for a moment what the colonel meant. But, of course, he was half an hour late down the hill.

"For half one damned hour the column has been held up by your—your moony incompetence. The Gurkhas

WHO'S WHO?

B C F H are the clues on page 38 which help to identify the man on the left as Fenner Brockway, Labour M.P. for Eton and Slough.

A D E G are the clues which identify the man on the right as Lord Nuffield, former chairman of Morris Motors. He is a life governor or vice-president of many hospitals and charitable institutions in Britain and the Commonwealth.

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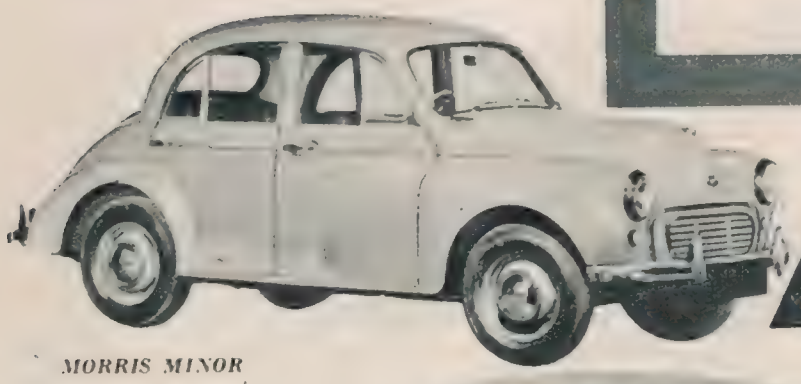

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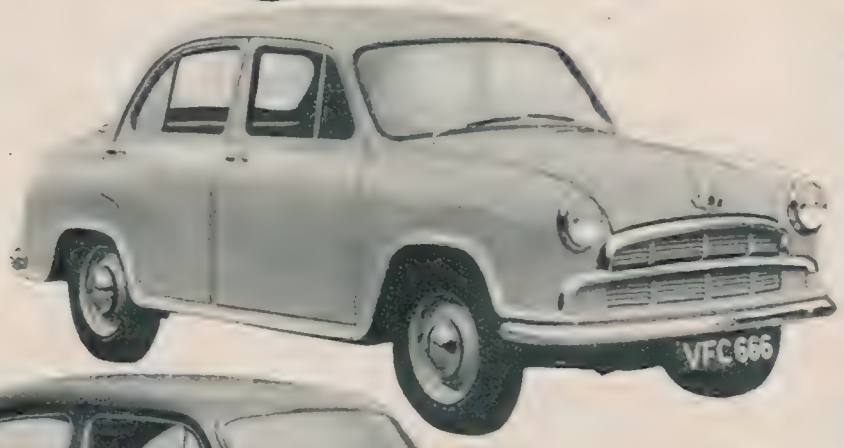

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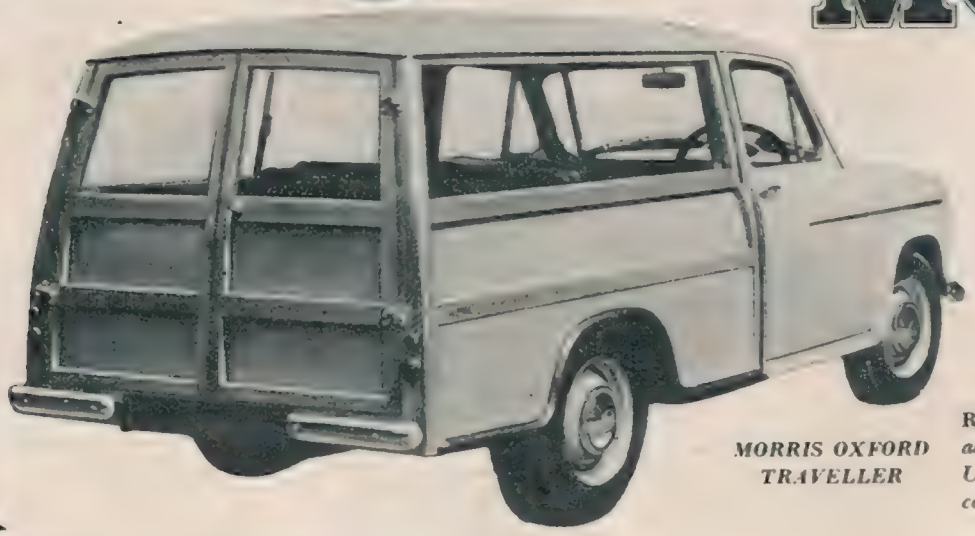

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"It's nice to hear yours too"

are in action up front. We're all bursting our guts to get into camp quickly . . . and then we have to wait till you wake up!"

"I'm sorry, sir."

"That's not good enough." Preece was almost snarling. "Consider yourself in open arrest. Now—*get a move on!*"

"Thank you, sir."

That was a silly thing to say, too. He could hear the popping louder now. The battle must be spreading. But didn't he have to take off his belt if he was in arrest? The colonel had turned away. Everywhere, the protective hill top picquets were running down the slopes to rejoin the column. In the dried stream bed, which was the trail, gun mules trotted past with loads clashing and jangling. Machine gunners jerked at their heavy tripods. Horsemen cantered by, reeling up cable. The dust rose again in a choking cloud. Jimmy began to fiddle with the buckle of the belt that held together his equipment—pistol holster, ammunition pouch, compass case, haversack, water bottle.

Sergeant Jones whispered fiercely in his ear, "*Mister* Wood, keep the belt on. There iss no need to take it off when you are placed in open arrest on actif service. Now, come with me, *please*!"

Jimmy turned and ran forward at the tail of his platoon. Down here the wind blew in eddies, not with that steady sough, and he couldn't often hear it under the noise of boots and trampling hooves and the distant crackle of machine guns. Perhaps he didn't need it any more. Tonight, in his blanket, in a shallow hole in the ground, he'd be able to work the theme towards the perfection that waited just around the corners of his mind.

He looked at Jones beside him with sharp surprise. The sergeant hummed as he jog-trotted on, a snatch of that private music. Could Jones have *read* the scrawled notes? Or—oh God—could someone else have written the glory that waited in his brain?

Tonight, he'd get it tonight. . . .

* * *

Grey and black streamers of smoke drifted down the valley, replacing the dawn haze that the sun had dispersed. Colonel Preece examined Pinzakot. Not one stone standing on another . . . very few stones in the place anyway, just mud and straw baked together. Once, there had been thirty or forty houses, and five big towers—all level with the rocky soil now.

He fingered his chin. Surprisingly little opposition so far. The fusiliers had lost one man killed by night sniping, and three more wounded on the hillsides. The two Indian battalions and the Gurkhas had suffered as lightly. Could Malik Khel have developed a guilty conscience about the cold-blooded murder of the political agent at a time when he was their guest? Nothing was impossible in this crazy country.

Still, it was a great deal more likely that they had reserved their strength to knock hell out of the column on the way back to its fort. It was always easier for them then; and sound tactics, too. The lean men would gather the vultures, and follow up relentlessly while the clumsy column struggled back to its base through their waterless hills.

Only twenty miles to go. Three days, at the snail's pace which conditions enforced. Where capture meant torture, each step had to be protected. The infantry in front sent up groups of men, called picquets, on to the hills flanking the trail, the picquets stayed till the reserve infantry, the baggage mules, the engineers and artillery, the camel train with the wounded—all the paraphernalia of the force had snaked past. Then their task was done, and the rearguard called them down.

PREECE looked round at the bustle of departure. The fusiliers' parade ground sheen had vanished under the dust and grime of five hard days. A company of Gurkhas swung past . . . quicker on the hill than his Welshmen, he thought. Quick on the hill. . . . That would be the difference between life and death now. When the rearguard ordered a picquet to come down, it had to come—like the wind; otherwise the waiting, watching tribesmen would be there, on top of it and round it and behind it, and no one could help it.

Calling down picquets was like working at a jigsaw puzzle in which the pieces altered their shape every few seconds. Suppose No. 1 picquet came down first, then Nos. 2 and 3 would protect it. But within five minutes the tribesmen would be on the hill where No. 1 had been. From there they could shoot up Nos. 2 and 3 when *they* came down. So Nos. 2 and 3 had to withdraw together, and not more than five minutes after No. 1. But

No. 4 became dangerously exposed as soon as No. 3 had gone . . . yet it had to be held until the tail of the vulnerable column had disappeared safely round the next corner half a mile ahead . . . And so on all up the trail, in an interlocking tactical move.

Second-Lieutenant Jimmy Wood and his platoons marched by, and Preece remembered that the brigadier hadn't found time to take up his case yet. The boy didn't seem at all self-conscious about being in open arrest. Damn, he had meant to put that platoon on a cushy job today, like baggage guard. Too late now, but he'd have to keep them out of any tricky spots, or heaven alone knew what might happen. What on earth *did* Wood think about all the time? Did he think at all?

At ten o'clock, while moving forward and awaiting the fusiliers' turn to start picqueting, Preece heard the mutter and rattle of firing from the back of the column. It grew steadily louder, and spread forward till the hills echoed with it. The mountain guns barked from the floor of the valley. The tethered gun mules cropped the thin grass patiently.

From picquet after picquet the wagging flags sent down reports of enemy creeping closer, sniping, waiting. Stretcher-bearers struggled down the mountainsides. In the mobile hospital the doctors bent over the men who lay awkwardly huddled in the light panniers on the side of the camels. And then the fusiliers' turn for picqueting came.

Preece wished the brigadier would go away and not sit there on a shooting stick, watching in silence. As he turned to send up his first picquet, the brigadier drawled, "Picquet tight, please, Preece. Leave no holes. And kindly keep 'em moving."

Preece said, "Yes, sir."

THE brigadier uprooted his stick and strolled down the trail. Preece looked round, and found Second-Lieutenant Wood at his elbow, waiting for orders. He said hurriedly: "Take our platoon aside a minute, Wood. I want you for another job."

Standing beside the boy, Sergeant Jones broke in meaningly, "Colonel, sir—the platoon iss ready *now*."

Preece hesitated. Of course, the sergeant would really command, and he could be trusted. His Welsh fervour might go sour if the platoon were set aside. "All right," Preece said sharply. "You listen too, Jones . . . in case Mr. Wood becomes a casualty. . . . See that isolated ridge there? Here, look along the pointer. There! That is your position. Your picquet number is 17. Here's the slip. Now, your strength—one revolver, twenty-four rifles, three Vickers guns. Correct?"

Jimmy said, "I think so, sir."

"You think! . . . Well, get moving. And when the rearguard calls you down, hurry!"

Jimmy saluted, Sergeant Jones waved his rifle, the platoon shook out into open formation and moved away up the slope.

Preece watched them go. They'd get up without any trouble. Coming down would be a different matter. That was an important place he'd sent them to.

He looked at it again—very important. He saw now that the trail curved round, so that Wood's ridge commanded it, in two directions, for over a mile. Why had he sent Wood, of all people, up there?

He lifted the binoculars and looked yet again. He'd been thinking so much about Wood and Jones that he had badly misjudged the ground. That place needed two platoons, if not a company. Too late now.

"*Kindly keep 'em moving.*" The brigadier's words echoed in his ears, the brigadier's flat eyes bored into his memory. A little sick at heart, he hardened his voice, rasped the orders for the next picquet, and moved forward.

Jimmy Wood looked out over the mountains, and thought them beautiful in their hardness. He noticed that his batman, Fusilier Welman, never moved more than a yard away from him. Sergeant Jones must have

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"Surprise, surprise! I've made the supper"

threatened him with murder if Mr. Wood managed to disappear again. He moved his shoulders impatiently—that was unnecessary now. He'd caught the music firmly the night they put him in arrest. He hadn't been able to develop it fully yet, and it still sounded in his head, but now he could hear and notice outside things as well.

He heard the noise of war rolling round the sky in waves. A battery of mountain guns would fire together, and as the whirring roar of the shells faded, the insistent hammer of machine guns would swell over it. He saw pillars of dust and smoke shoot up where the shells burst.

Men were dying there. Now and then the wind brought the stammering hysteria of Vickers guns. That, too, meant men were dying. *Brrrrp—brrp — brrrrp — brp-brp-brp* — a shivering among the bushes, a spatter of bullets, blood trickling out over the burning stones.

All quiet here though, just silent rocks and deep shadows. The rearguard would call him down soon. Through glasses he picked up a scurry of movement from the hillocks occupied by the picquets numbered 15 and 16. They were getting ready.

The slow music flooded through him as far as he had worked it out, then stopped. It was a lovely theme, a theme of getting ready, of preparation—to face the open sea, to step out on a high mountain; an exhilarated, expectant theme. A new phrase of it rose to the surface. . . .

Crack, thud: *Crack-crack*, thud-thud! Welman's arm hit him across the back of the neck and threw him forward on to the stones. *Crack*, thud! The air snapped and exploded.

"It iss sniping begun, sir" Welman yelled in his ear, lying pressed close to the ground beside him.

"Oh, yes? All right, I hear it. Stay here."

JIMMY scrambled to his feet, dusted off his knees, and walked slowly to the brow of the hill. The firing redoubled and something plucked at his pith helmet.

His platoon began to return the fire, shooting aimlessly into the bushes. He couldn't hear himself think, and yelled out in sudden anger, "Be quiet! What are you shooting at? There's nothing to see, is there?"

He supposed it must help just to make a noise if an unseen enemy was shooting at you. But this was altogether too meaningless a noise.

He found Sergeant Jones crouched behind the crest, dropped beside him, and lifted his glasses.

Nos. 15 and 16 picquets suddenly erupted in a flurry of khaki and glinting steel. Jimmy nodded to himself—they were off. He'd have to be ready to go now. The order would come any minute.

He turned to Jones. "Give the order, sergeant—prepare to retire."

The sergeant ran, stooped behind the crest line. The prone soldiers buttoned their pouches, slipped their bayonets on to the ends of their rifles, and put away the loose ammunition clips lying beside them. Jimmy looked down at the trail. He saw the red flag marking the tail of the column, and Colonel Preece, and the brigadier. The men of 15 and 16 picquets were bounding down the lower slopes. They reached the road. Jimmy turned and glanced forward down the other side of the hill.

A crowded tangle of camels and baggage mules eddied about on the valley floor, quite close in front of the red flag. The colonel would not be able to order him down yet after all, at least not until that mess was cleared up and got moving. Otherwise the tribesmen would be able to run straight down into it. He steadied the binoculars, only half aware of the bullets smacking irregularly past.

THE glasses caught a flicker of bayonets down there. Among the scrubby bushes he saw men running every way, and picked up the flying grey and black of tribesmen's rags. By heaven, the tribesmen were already with the column . . . but not many, yet. By his feet the platoon signaller began to wag his flag. That would be the message from the colonel, ordering him to stand fast and hold the ring until the reserves had cleared up the mess in the column. It would be tough up here, with 15 and 16 gone. He looked carefully to see if No. 18 was still in position. Yes . . . it would not be impossible while 18 was there.

The signaller lowered his flag and turned. "Retire, sir. . . . And be quick, they said."

"Retire? Are you sure?"

Shots whipped over more profusely now. The excited signaller yelled, "Of course, you—sir! I am a trained signaller. I can read Morse!"

With a sinking at the pit of his stomach Jimmy saw, over to the right, No. 18 picquet break from their hill top and dash down the slope. It *couldn't* be right. They *couldn't* have seen, down there, what was happening round the corner ahead of them. But with 15, 16 and 18 gone, the tribesmen would surround him in no time, and the colonel had *ordered* him to go.

In anguish he looked down again at the valley floor. Chaos—turmoil—bayonets and knives, the guns swinging to fire muzzle-burst into the scrub. They'd murder the wounded in the camel panniers, cut the baggage train to pieces—if he once opened the floodgates.

Out of the anguish came sudden calm, and his expectant music, his firm and lovely music. He spoke quietly to the signaller. "Send a message! 'Enemy into column ahead. Will hold here till further orders.'"

Sergeant Jones ran up, the haversack flapping at his side. He dragged a black and hairy forearm across his forehead and screamed, beside himself. "Giff the order to retire—at once! You fool, sir, you will haff us all killed for your music. . . ."

"Look there." Jimmy pointed down the hill. Jones opened his mouth, looked, and shut it with a snap.

"*Ferry* good, sir!"

With Jones kneeling tensely beside him, Jimmy watched while the signaller sent the message. If he had made a mistake—or even if he hadn't—the

reached out and took the overnight bag from me.

"I came along a bit quicker than I thought I would," I said.

He was clearly puzzled, as they all must have been by my telegram. "Did you come on a different ship?" he asked. "We thought you'd be flying from Fremantle, arriving Saturday morning."

"I didn't come that way," I said. "I had to stay in London a bit longer. I flew all the way, through New York and San Francisco to Sydney." We passed into the airport building. "How's my mother, Harry? She's not here, is she?"

"She didn't come," he said. "She don't go away much now. Three months or more since she went down to Melbourne." He paused by the newspaper stand. "The colonel, he was coming down to meet you, but we had a bit of trouble."

"What sort of trouble?"

"The house-parlourmaid. Seems like she committed suicide or something. Anyway, she's dead."

I stared at him. "For God's sake! How did that happen?"

"I don't really know. It only happened this morning, and I left about half past ten to get down here to meet you. She took tablets or something, what they give you to make you sleep."

"She did it last night?"

"That's right, Mr. Alan."

"Who found her?"

"When she didn't come down to her work, Annie went up to her room."

"Old Annie found her?"

"That's right. She was dead. The colonel rang through for me to go up to the house, and soon after I got there Dr. Stanley arrived. I suppose the colonel telephoned for him. But there wasn't anything that he could do; she was dead all right. So then they got on to the police."

I stood by the paper-stand while the crowd milled around us. It was a muddle and a mess, and I was deeply sorry for my father and mother. My father was over seventy, and my mother not much less, and neither of them in the best of health. Too bad that they should have a nuisance of this nature thrust on them.

"What did she do it for?" I asked. "In trouble with some man?"

He wrinkled his brows. "I wouldn't think so," he said. "Coombargana's a small place and not so easy to get away from unless you've got a car of your own, which she hadn't. And she couldn't have been going with one of the lads at Coombargana and have no one know about it."

"How long had she been with us?"

"About a year. Maybe a bit longer. English, she was."

I nodded; she would have been. English or Dutch or German; an Australian house-parlourmaid is rare indeed. "Well, I wish to God she'd picked another day to do it," I remarked.

I CLAIMED my luggage and went out to the car. My suitcases went into the boot, and Harry said: "Will you drive, Mr. Alan?" I shook my head; I wanted to be able to see the countryside on this, my first day back in my own country.

We got into the car and drove out of the airport. I did not talk to Harry till we were clear of the houses and making good time on the highway out to Bacchus Marsh, but then I began to question him about the property.

"Let's see," he said. "It was after you went away that the colonel sold the hard land up on Baldy Hill to the Commission, for resumption? Five thousand two hundred acres he let go, for the soldier settlers." He dropped to forty for a moment behind a trailer truck and then accelerated past it and up to seventy-five again. "I was sorry when the colonel decided to do that," he said, "but, thinking it over, maybe he was right. What's left is all good land, and we've got enough."

"That leaves us with about thirteen thousand acres?"

"Thirteen thousand three hundred and eighty-seven."

"What are we running on that now?"

"Thirty-seven thousand eight hundred and forty Merinoes, all told. Six hundred and eighty-two Herefords."

I nodded, indexing the figures in my memory. This was my business from now on, and everything that I had been in Europe was behind me. "Finished the shearing?" I inquired.

"Finished last Friday week."

"How did it run out?"

"Good," he said. "We sheared seven hundred and sixteen bales this year." A bale of wool contains three hundred pounds in weight, and at the prices that I knew were current it was worth about £160, taking an average of the grades. Our wool clip must have been worth £115,000 or so, and then there would be the sales of cattle and of lambs on top of that. Take away the costs of running the property, say £30,000 or £40,000, and we were still left with an income of over £100,000 for tax. It had been like that for several years.

"That's all right," I said. "How many did we shear last year?"

"Six hundred and seventy-eight bales, Mr. Alan," he said. "It's the improved pastures doing it."

As we went on into the Western District through Bacchus Marsh to Ballarat he told me all about the property. My father had been ploughing back much of the profits into the land and saving the rest for death duties. He was determined to improve the carrying capacity of the property by mechanization. There were now four big diesel tractors on the place, and he drove all over the property in a Land-Rover. That suited me, for artificial feet are something of a handicap upon a horse.

There was a great deal for me to learn about the property before I could unload some of the work from my parents, and I was quite keen to make a start. First of all, it would be necessary to clean up this infernal business of the house-parlourmaid, however.

We passed through Bacchus Marsh and up over the Pentland Hills. We dropped down off the hills at eighty miles an hour on the way to Ballarat, and there were the long gorse hedges all in bloom, mile after mile of them, scenting the countryside in the warm sun.

This was my own country, and I was glad to be home. When I had come home before, I had disliked it all, and fretted bad-temperedly till I got away again. That was in 1946 when I had come out of hospital in England, stumbling along insecurely on my dummy feet. The wartime restlessness was still on me then, and the European sense of strife and urgency; I could do little that was effective at Coombargana with my disability, and my father was still active and well capable of getting along without me.

I stuck it for three years, because it seemed to me that now that Bill was dead and Helen married, I ought to be at home learning to carry on the property, but it didn't work out well. By 1948 I was safe on my feet and able to get about quite normally, but I was thirty-four and life was slipping past me. I began to feel I should go crazy if I didn't get away from it to England again, where things were happening.

I think my parents understood, because they made no objection when I suggested that I should go back to Oxford for a year and finish taking my degree. That was five years ago.

What I didn't realize then was that it wasn't England I was really fretting for. It was my lost youth.

"I came back this time with a quieter mind. I was thirty-nine, middle-aged and mature, able

I stood there, cursing and embarrassed, at the

to realize and to appreciate that there were things of consequence and value going on in my own country. Even the job that I had spurned before, the job of running Coombargana to turn out more meat and wool each year, now seemed to me to be worth doing. And I felt I owed it to my parents to come home, for they were getting tired and old, and sometimes rather ill.

WE drove into the suburbs of Ballarat. I turned to Harry. "This parlourmaid," I said. "You say she was English. Do you know if she had any relatives in Australia?"

"I never heard she had, Mr. Alan," he replied.

"Did my parents get her through a registry office?"

He shook his head. "She turned up in Forfar at the Post Office Hotel one day, by bus from

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GR 302C — 1345

"Good thing I put anti-freeze in"

tribesmen would deliver judgment, and execute it. They had rougher methods than putting him in arrest. He thought he saw the colonel turn quickly to the brigadier. He didn't know what they were saying, but he could guess.

Preece muttered, "I'm sorry, sir. I thought. . . ."

The brigadier said "Not very hard Preece. Not if you sent Wood up there, knowing he was useless. And what made you imagine that one platoon would be sufficient?"

"I'm sorry, sir."

THE brigadier's tongue moved over his bloodless lips. "So you ought to be! Well, they are your men, Preece, and you will write soothing letters to the widows and orphans in due course, I don't doubt. But not, possibly, in your present capacity. . . ."

He cocked his head and listened. "Those guns sound funny! Here, Thompson, where are your guns supposed to be firing?"

"Defensive fire tasks beyond 17, 18 and 19 picquets, sir."

"They're certainly not doing it. Find out!"

"Very good, sir. . . . The line's cut forward somewhere, we can't get——"

An artillery galloper rocked round the spur of the hill, bent low over his horse's neck, and pulled up, savagely sawing at the reins.

He shouted in urgent Punjabi: "Tribesmen into the column ahead, sahib, among the guns. Gurkha baggage escort are clearing them up—but we can't move."

Preece watched the brigadier's sallow face. The eyes veiled a second, then—"Preece, tell 17 and 18 picquets to stay up till we've cleared this. . . ." He paused, and remembered: "But 18 is down, and 17 is still there—on its own initiative. Will they be able to hold it?"

"I'm beginning to think they will, sir."

The brigadier said, "Perhaps. All right, send your reserve companies forward with me. Thompson, you come too. This will take at least an hour. And Preece, use your machine guns to support Wood. I'll send a galloper back when he can come down. Meantime, pray! Your Frontier Fool seems to have turned out some sort of a Frontier Angel."

When the brigadier was gone, Preece and an anxious group around him stood with glasses glued to their eyes and watched the ridge. The machine guns, aimed just to right and left of No. 17's position, hammered in long bursts till steam bubbled in clouds from the condenser cans. Preece felt the sweat running down his face. He could gauge the desperation of the fight up there by the curling wisps of smoke, the kicking of stones and dust, the rattle and roar carried down on the wind.

Two Hawker biplanes bumbling overhead curved lazily over and the sound of their engines rose in pitch. Their single front guns echoed round the sky, the black specks broke loose from the wings and whistled down. Whoompf! Whoompf! The colonel understood this music, but today he had no liking for it. At his side, Isaacs and Morgan were whistling softly, some damned hymn. His heart beat painfully.

JIMMY said, "How many left now, Sergeant?" And Jones answered, "Eighteen including us, but three of them cannot walk."

They lay side by side. Along the crest line the fusiliers fired slowly or lay hunched and still. Nearby, the wounded signaller groaned and swore in the liquid Welsh tongue. Jones's left arm hung loose, shattered at the elbow. Blood clotted in Jimmy's hair and flowed slowly down the side of his face. He saw everything, and cared, but could not be afraid. He hummed softly.

Jones shouted, "That will be a great piece indeed, sir, when you haff finished it."

"Thank you, Sergeant. Did you see me writing it, that day?"

Jones said "*Mister* Wood, the whole battalion knows, excepting the officers! I wass standing over you for an hour, no less, so you would not be disturbed. We are Welsh, and we understand . . . though mind indeed, sir, we do not think you are cut out to be an officer."

"No." He saw a flutter in the scrub downhill, lifted the rifle and fired quickly.

Jones turned his head, and said: "They are signalling. '1, 7 P, Q, T R, T, R'—that iss us, sir, the retire code."

Jimmy looked down the slope—six hundred yards forward to the valley floor, with several folds in the ground and a lot of holly oak. The tribesmen had been unnaturally quiet recently—and they'd had plenty of time to work past his flanks into that broken ground. He knew suddenly that the mass of them would be waiting there, in ambush, on the path they'd think he must take. But some of them would be out at the back, too, waiting to follow up—not so many perhaps. He hummed louder . . . a new boldness, expectancy yielding before a full statement.

He turned his bloody head and spoke to Jones. The sergeant's black eyes flickered. He nodded his head and said slowly, "It iss right, sir. Indeed, I hope it iss right."

They scrambled up together. Jimmy blew his whistle and waved his arms. Jones screamed, "Fusiliers, *forward*! retire *forward*!" Jimmy laughed weakly at the words. The soldiers rose and stumbled over the crest and down the hill. The whole men supported and fiercely dragged their wounded, moaning comrades. All who had their arms free fired from the hip as they ran down the slope.

Seconds of nothing, seconds of startled bearded faces, the pistol kicking in his hand, the bayonets' glint and rise, shouts, shots, screams, crash of stones and bushes, and they broke through the thin cordon.

His mouth was dry and his throat swollen. He croaked a command, "Right! Round the hill to the path. Right again!"

The music died away, the statement made and finished. He'd have to write it down quickly as soon as possible. He'd orchestrate it later, in peace somewhere, by the sea.

COLONEL PREECE watched them stumbling up the track, and counted quickly. Fifteen men. Half a platoon. The boy was late again—late like a man who wins a V.C. For a moment, when he'd watched them jump up and disappear the wrong way over the hill, he thought they'd gone mad. But the brigadier had come back by then, and he'd pointed silently to the broken ground and said, "That'll be full of them. Your boy's a genius. Now that he's gone, the other way, we can turn the guns on to that stuff. Thompson, d'you hear? . . ."

As the remnants of the platoon came level, and men ran to help them, Preece saw Sergeant Jones and his shattered arm.

Of course! That would be it. Jones, the old hard-bitten regular sergeant, had seen them through! Jones, who hadn't a thought in his head beyond soldiering.

Preece sighed with relief. He didn't like to think he could have made so big a misjudgment over Wood. Then he felt ashamed, and stepped forward to congratulate them both.

They moved on up the trail. Preece saw Jones refuse the doctor's help with a curt "When we get to camp, sir." His own task over, Preece walked along twenty yards behind the platoon. No, he hadn't made any mistakes—it was Jones's dark force that had driven them . . . and something in themselves, of course.

Jimmy Wood stumbled occasionally as he walked, and dropped farther and farther back. As Preece drew level, he saw that the boy was trying to scribble on a signal pad as he walked. Heavens, there was no need to write a report yet . . . he glanced down, saw the scrawled staves, and shook his head. The boy had better resign now, while still in the glory of today's exploit. He'd proved himself, and seemed to have found something, but this just wasn't his life.

Colonel Preece took the second-lieutenant's elbow and said, not unkindly, "Come on, Jimmy. Don't be late into camp." THE END

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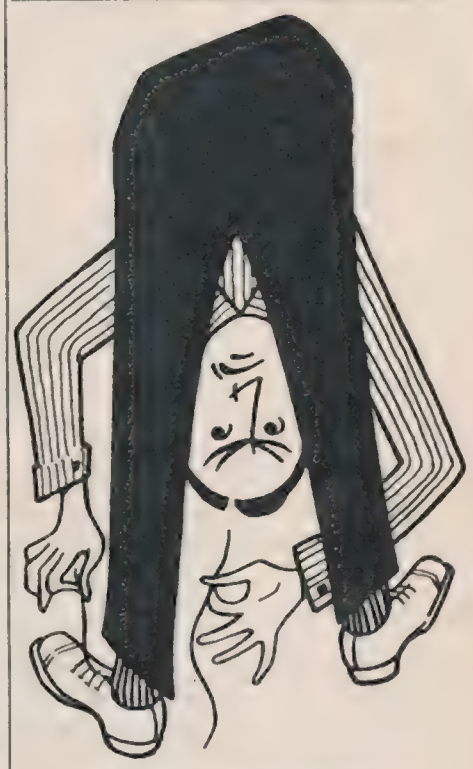

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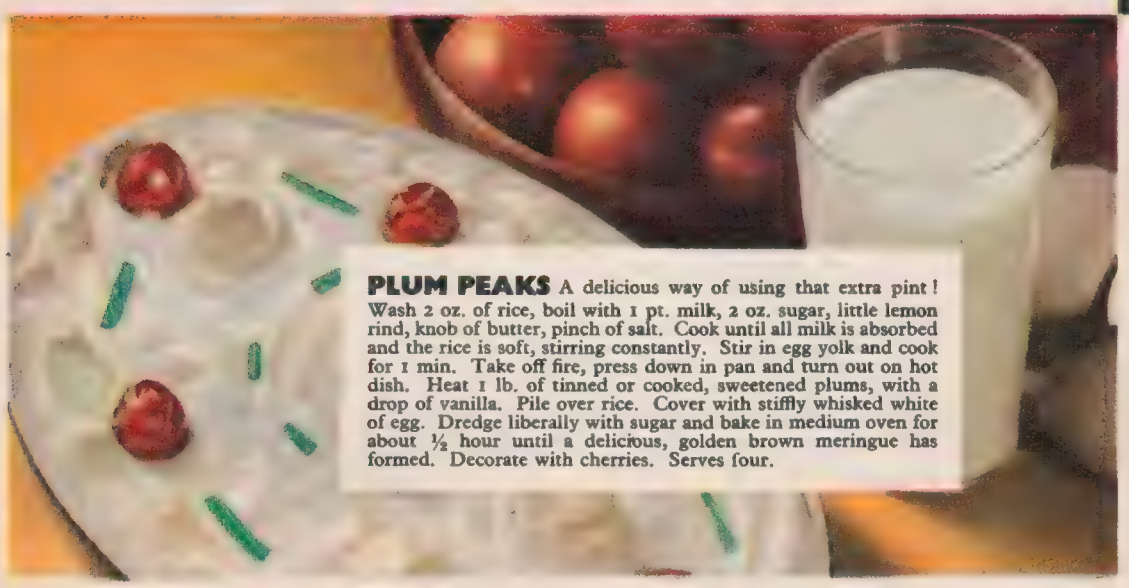

PLUM PEAKS A delicious way of using that extra pint! Wash 2 oz. of rice, boil with 1 pt. milk, 2 oz. sugar, little lemon rind, knob of butter, pinch of salt. Cook until all milk is absorbed and the rice is soft, stirring constantly. Stir in egg yolk and cook for 1 min. Take off fire, press down in pan and turn out on hot dish. Heat 1 lb. of tinned or cooked, sweetened plums, with a drop of vanilla. Pile over rice. Cover with stiffly whisked white of egg. Dredge liberally with sugar and bake in medium oven for about ½ hour until a delicious, golden brown meringue has formed. Decorate with cherries. Serves four.

On your doorstep every morning!

Come rain, hail or snow, your milkman delivers the milk! What a service! What value! Make the most of it. Take that extra pint today — and see!

SIR HUMPHREY AND THE ATOM CURE

Continued from page 19

them St. Moritz prices, too. Keep their insides full of atomic water so they'll be able to jump over the moon if they're so disposed. There's a fortune in it, Daddles, my boy, and in consideration of your having found the place, I'll let you in on the ground floor."

"I was 'in on the ground floor' when Anglo-Patagonian blew up, thanks," said the general bitterly. "That was enough ground floor to last me for the rest of my life. If Horace was selling gold sovereigns at a shilling apiece, he couldn't sell 'em to me. In fact, Horace couldn't sell me anything."

"Daddles!" exclaimed Lady Ridway. "You will kindly remember that you are speaking of a member of my family!"

"I wish I could forget it, my dear," said the general sadly.

The coolness engendered between Horace and the general lasted for the remainder of the day and until the following afternoon, when Horace flew to Tangier.

"If you've got any sense," said Lady Ridway to her husband, "you'll invest your sister's legacy in this venture. Look at yourself in a mirror. The water must be miraculous. Horace will make a fortune out of it."

"My dear," said her husband mildly, "I have never doubted for a moment that Horace would make a fortune out of it. But that doesn't mean he would let us make any."

When the general awoke the following morning, he announced uncompromisingly, "I am going to La Bastide today, my dear. I would like to see Castel again to express my gratitude to him. A very remarkable man is Castel, and I hate to think that I am indirectly responsible for allowing Horace to swindle him."

"Daddles, you've no right to say such a wicked thing!"

"My dear," came the mild retort, "I have no right to assert that the sun will rise tomorrow morning. But I do so assert, nevertheless."

The general took with him a small suitcase and for the next twenty-four hours his wife did not see him. But as soon as he returned she renewed her persuasions to invest his sister's legacy in the new venture.

"My dear," he said in gentle rebuke, "as we shall never see Horace or his financial operations through the same eyes, let us drop him as a subject of conversation. What is left of life is too short for acrimony."

THE Ridways returned to England for the summer, arriving back at the Pension Seaview for Christmas. During the intervening months enthusiastic letters came from Horace, who reported that the four-hundred-room hotel was almost completed.

Horace, believing that Christmas was a family occasion, spent the week at the Pension Seaview, bringing with him for correction the proofs of an elaborate brochure. The general studied these with interest.

"What's all this about a golf course?" he asked Horace. "The land for miles around is practically perpendicular. Nobody could make a golf course there."

"Don't you believe it, Daddles!" said Horace amiably. "I'll guarantee to make one between breakfast and lunch. All you need is a few flowerpots, some pieces of bamboo five feet in height, nine small squares of red calico and nine small squares of white calico. The rest, my dear chap, is scenery, and heaven knows, we've got plenty of that."

"I see," said the general looking up from the proofs, "that you've found a first-class chef, but surely, if he was chef to His Imperial Majesty the Czar of Russia, he must be getting a bit long in the tooth."

"But I don't say that, Daddles," said Horace patiently. "I say that he was in the employ of His Imperial Majesty the Czar of Russia, which is the truth. Sokoloff was in point of fact cook to a sergeants' mess at Brest-Litovsk in 1915. I've known him ages."

"But can he cook, Horace?"

"How should I know?"

"But," said the general, spluttering with indignation, "you say here that the customers are going to have 'a superbly balanced cuisine under the control of one of Europe's dietetic experts!' You're a crook, Horace!"

"I won't go as far as Daddles," said Lady Ridway judicially, "but I confess that it doesn't seem strictly honest—and in print too."

"You should have read some of my earlier prospectuses, Julia," said her brother amiably. "But what you forget, both of you, is that the customers aren't coming to eat. They are coming to be cured of the effects of overeating, and to drink the miraculous radioactive waters. Somewhere—it's in small print, naturally—I've warned them to expect Spartan fare."

"Horace," said Lady Ridway thoughtfully, "you mentioned in one of your letters that the shares already showed a hundred per cent profit. Well, I think I'll take my profit now."

"The market's a bit sticky just now," replied Horace. "But you wait until the Fountain of Eternal Youth gets cracking. Then you'll be glad you didn't take a trifling hundred per cent profit."

Lady Ridway bit her lip in silence. To say more would be disloyal to Horace.

"What's this blank space for?" asked the general, looking up from the proofs.

HORACE was unruffled. "Glad you reminded me of that, old top. That's for the analysis of the miraculous radioactive water. Just as well to know what's in it, don't you agree? We shall need the analysis for the labels too."

"What labels?"

"The labels on the bottles."

"The labels on what bottles?"

"The bottles of miraculous radioactive water, of course. Didn't I tell you that I'm installing a bottling plant with a capacity of thirty thousand bottles per day?"

"But, Horace," said the general in blank horror, "the flow of the spring is only four litres—call it a gallon—per minute! That won't be enough for the customers on the spot to drink!"

"My dear Daddles," said Horace easily, "please give me credit for a little intelligence. All that's been anticipated. The bottling plant's in Paris—nearer to the biggest consumer area. Big saving in transport costs. A friend of mine—a very eminent physicist, by the way—has worked out a system for gingering up Paris tap water. We'll give 'em radioactivity!"

Three days later Horace drove his sister and brother-in-law up to La Bastide. The place was quite unrecognizable. The Fountain of Eternal Youth was now a dream of synthetic alabaster and chromium plate.

"Who are those two depressed-looking chaps?" asked the general. "They seem to be following us."

"Keep moving, Daddles," said Horace out of the corner of his mouth. "I'd just as soon not talk to them."

"Who are they?"

"I forget their names, but I met them in Paris. Sold them a nice block of shares too. Careless chaps! Didn't read the small print."

"Is there any small print on my shares?" Lady Ridway asked suddenly.

Horace didn't seem to hear. "And now," he said airily, "I'll show you the kitchens and the dining-room."

Horace continued to be evasive. Lady Ridway made a valiant effort to hold on to the shreds of her belief in her brother's integrity, but if it had not been for the faintly malicious triumph she read at times in the general's eyes, there can be little doubt that even this would have vanished in face of the facts. At that stage, her husband did not know that she had invested her entire savings in the Fountain of Eternal Youth.

ON a splendid day in early June came the Grand Opening. Horace had arranged for a host of notabilities to grace the occasion. They came from far and wide. A false note was struck during the speeches when a large, dignified man, wearing an imperial beard and an undertaker's frock coat, fell off the platform, smashing a bottle of brandy he had been carrying in his tail pocket.

"Who is that disgusting creature?" asked Lady Ridway.

"That's Doctor Knecht, the medical superintendent," replied Horace. "Fine, dignified-looking bloke—that is, when he's sober."

"I hope he's properly qualified," observed the general.

"I expect he is, you know," replied Horace, "but when you come to think of it, what qualifications does he need? All he has to do is to see that the customers have plenty of this radioactive water sloshing about in their insides. . . . By the way, Julia, you wouldn't care for some more shares, would you? There's a block going cheap, and don't forget that it's in your interest to support the market. Panic selling at this time would ruin everyone—except, of course, the debenture holders."

"Who are the debenture holders, Horace?" asked his sister.

"Hullo, there's poor old Castel," said Horace. "Doesn't look at all happy, does he?"

"I suppose you swindled him too?" remarked the general.

"Do you know what I paid Castel for the whole shooting match? Guess."

"Don't go off at a tangent, Horace," said the general. "Julia wants to know who owns those debentures. So do I."

"Excuse me," said Horace, "but there's a man over there I want to talk to." He disappeared into the throng with amazing agility.

All through lunch the general was silent and thoughtful. "Tell me, Julia," he asked at last, fixing his wife with a steady gaze, "how much money did you give him to invest in this swindle?"

Lady Ridway was about to protest vehemently that Horace was a sadly

It's The Custom . . . *in NORHAM*

Vicar and people pray. Then, at midnight, the first net is shot

Nets are blessed for a season's fishing

AT the annual Blessing The Nets service at Norham-on-Tweed, in Northumberland, a special prayer, the Pedwell Prayer, is said for the safety of the salmon fishermen. "There have been no accidents or mishaps here in my time," says Davey Johnston, who has been fishing at Norham since 1923. "The only time we had any trouble was when a man fell into the river during the Blessing. He'd had a few too many beforehand."

River Tweed salmon are fattest in the spring, and the salmon net-fishing season at Norham runs from February 14 to September 14. Every year on the evening of February 13, a crowd of about two hundred people gathers on the south bank of the Tweed at the Pedwell fishery for the blessing service.

Salmon play an important part in the life of Norham. There are twenty-five families of fishermen living in this agricultural village—out of a population of about 450—and the Pedwell Fishery, which is half a mile long, is one of a score of fisheries between Norham and the sea, eight miles away. The Blessing has a long history, but it lapsed for many years until the vicar of the day, Matthew Green, revived it about fifty years ago.

The fishing begins sharp at midnight. Shortly beforehand, at a quarter to twelve, the vicar comes to the smooth-pebbled shore where the villagers are waiting, and steps into one of the fishing boats. Standing by the nets he conducts the short service by the light of a hurricane lamp.

"It is an impressive moment," says the present vicar, James Little, "especially on a moonlit, frosty night with the owls hooting in the silence." At the Pedwell Fishery, the Tweed is eighty yards wide. The opposite bank is in Scotland and rises steeply like an amphitheatre. Thick trees on the Scottish side throw back the sound of voices and singing.

Clustered round the boats, the people pray:

"Good Lord, lead us,
Good Lord, speed us,
From all perils, protect us,
In the darkness us direct.
Finest nights to land our fish,
Sound and big to fill our wish,
God keep our nets from snag and break,
For every man a goodly take,
Lord grant us."

After the service, the first net is "shot"—one end is secured on the bank, and a boat makes a wide circle with the other. By custom, the first salmon taken is given to the vicar. He seldom has many minutes to wait.

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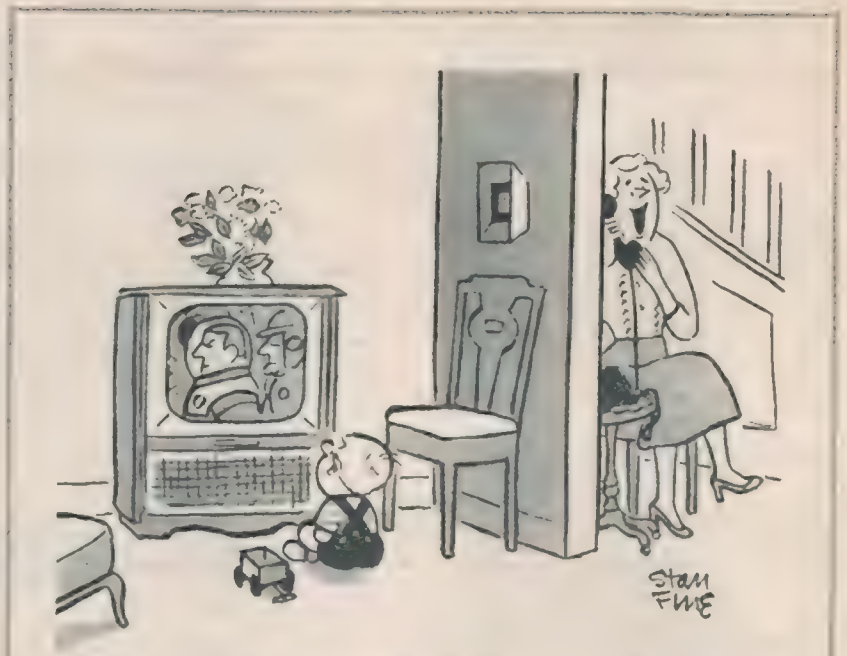
This was just a single experiment, but all over the world, in 45 different countries, millions of sufferers depend on this scientifically balanced antacid prescription for quicker, surer relief. Ask your chemist for 'Bismag'—75 tablets for 1/8d.



"Fred? Baby's just said his first sentence: 'Too much contrast'"

misunderstood man, but glimpsing her husband's stern face, she knew her protests would be useless. "I gave him five hundred pounds—almost all I possess. I see now that I was a fool."

"All is not lost, Julia," said the general, magnanimous in this moment of moral victory. "Trust me and all will be well."

"What are we to do, Daddles?"

"We are moving into the hotel for the summer, my dear," replied the general. "We will vacate our suite when Horace buys back your shares."

"But, my dear Daddles," said Horace when this decision had been communicated to him, "you can't do that. Your suite has been rented from tomorrow. We've taken a deposit."

"Then refund it, find the man another suite or buy back Julia's shares. The choice is yours. Julia and I stay here until she gets her money."

The general and Lady Ridway endured Sokoloff's cooking for just over two weeks. Then even the fact that it was free did not seem to justify eating any more of it.

It was the general who discovered the Restaurant des Alpes in the village about a mile distant from the hotel. The food was good, but expensive. By Sokoloff standards it was superb.

"We can't afford it, Daddles," said Lady Ridway, positively drooling, for cataracts of radioactive water seemed to have improved her usually good appetite, "But I didn't know that food could taste so good. Can we come here again, please?"

"From now onward, my dear, we are going to eat here daily," he said firmly.

"But think of how much it will cost, Daddles!"

"Who cares?" he asked rhetorically. "It's only money! It's either the climate here or the radioactive water, but I feel amazingly well."

HORACE discovered the restaurant on the following day, and it was not long before it became packed twice daily with refugees from Sokoloff's cooking.

One evening Horace entered the restaurant, his face black as thunder. "What's the matter, Horace?" asked the general.

"Everything!" replied Horace bitterly. "A couple of crooks have got me over a barrel! That's what's the matter! It's this restaurant! Everybody's eating here!"

"Who owns this restaurant, Horace?" asked his sister.

"That crook Doctor Castel owns half of it," replied Horace savagely, "and a chap I don't know—a Monsieur Calcul Biliare—owns the other half. I can deal with Castel, who's a bit simple about money matters, but this chap Calcul Biliare is a tough baby. I want to buy the place, but Biliare keeps raising the price. And the hell of it is that I've never laid eyes on the chap. He keeps out of my way."

"It so happens, Horace," said the general, "that I know Monsieur Calcul Biliare quite well. Saw him this morning, as a matter of fact."

"Did he mention the restaurant deal?"

"No, not a word."

"Now look, Daddles," said Horace intensely, "you're in a position to help me a great deal and—after all, my dear chap, I don't have to tell you that blood's thicker than water."

"What do you want me to do?" asked the general bluntly.

"Introduce me to Monsieur Calcul Biliare. Maybe I can do a deal behind Castel's back."

"Horace," said the general sternly, "before I lift a finger to help you I insist upon your buying back the worthless shares you sold to Julia. When you've done that, and not before, I'm prepared to negotiate on your behalf."

UNHAPPILY, Horace wrote out a cheque in his sister's favour. It was against his principles to part with real money if he could avoid it.

On the following day the general announced that Monsieur Calcul Biliare and Doctor Castel were prepared to negotiate the sale of the Restaurant des Alpes immediately. The price named shook Horace, the more so because he knew he had to pay it.

"If they'll knock a million francs off the price it's a deal," he said.

"No, Horace, not a penny less. They've another buyer in sight. If you want to close the deal, take my tip and do it now."

Horace surrendered.

"Daddles," said Lady Ridway, just before turning out the lights that night, "why did you never mention that you knew this Monsieur Calcul Biliare?"

"I'm extremely sleepy, my dear," replied the general. "I would be obliged if you would postpone the interrogation until tomorrow."

"I insist upon knowing! There's something fishy been going on and I'm determined to get to the bottom of it—now! Who is this Monsieur Calcul Biliare? And why don't I know him?"

"But you do know him, my dear," replied the general mildly. "He's talking to you now. Doctor Castel and I started the restaurant. Instead of investing my sister's legacy in Horace's swindle, as you wanted me to, we used that for capital."

It did not happen often that Lady Ridway was at a loss for words. "Daddles," she said after a long silence, "I think you're simply wonderful."

"Nonsense, my dear," he replied modestly, "I'm merely somewhat radioactive. Doctor Castel's Geiger counter leaps like a startled deer whenever I go near it." THE END

I SAID IT WITH MUSIC

Continued from page 23

and I were married at the register office at Slough. In July, 1942, we had a daughter and named her Anne. Out of the debris of our experience, Peggy and I steadily built for ourselves a solid partnership, a friendly home and, with our child, a happy family.

Though the B.B.C. took much of my time during the war, I continued to produce my own shows and to search for new talent. In 1943, I bought the title rights of the radio show, *Navy Mixture*, and put it on the halls. For a co-star with Petty Officer Jack Watson, the radio compère, I took Norman Woolland out of his announcing job at the B.B.C. and set him on the road to bigger things with a £100-a-week contract. *Navy Mixture* toured the country successfully for nearly twelve months.

I tried to buy *Itma*, complete with the radio cast, but Tommy Handley refused to go on the halls. Wisely he knew and accepted his limitations. He was the greatest radio comedian I have known, but on the stage he had always flopped miserably in everything except one sketch called "The Dis-orderly Room."

Road Show Lacked Action

So, when *Itma* came off the air for a summer rest, I took the cast, without Tommy and headed by Dorothy Summers as Mrs. Mopp, and put them into a road show which I called *Can I Do You Now, Sir?* I set it against a radio studio background.

At the first rehearsals, I soon saw that the show lacked life and action. Some of the stars of radio's leading programme found it difficult to act on the stage. To put more movement into the show, I searched for another comedian.

A friend at the B.B.C. recommended to me a one-time crooner with Geraldo's orchestra, Derek Roy. I auditioned Roy and liked him.

"If you want to join the show, I'll give you thirty-five pounds a week and raise it to forty after a fortnight if you turn out successfully," I said.

Derek accepted my offer.

Soon after the show opened, I met Val Parnell, the impresario, in the upstairs bar at the Nottingham Empire. When I heard Derek Roy's cue music, I asked Val to come with me to see my new find. We stood at the back of the circle. When Val saw Roy appear, he said: "Come on, let's have another drink." I told him to be patient. Derek went over splendidly, and Val, who had previously rejected Derek Roy after an audition, shook his head in amazement.

In building a star entertainer, much depends on the opportunities which his or her management can provide.

Enjoys Taking A Gamble

Of course, the manager or agent who guarantees an unknown a regular wage and launches him into a show is taking a risk with his money. If the artist flops, he is a liability for ten, twenty, even thirty weeks until the contract runs out. But I have always enjoyed taking a gamble.

I have found performers worth developing in out-of-the-way concert parties, and even while sitting at home. One day, Peggy called me into the lounge.

"Listen to this lovely voice," she said. "It's a programme coming from the Midland Region."

My inquiries the next day led me to offer a job to a girl named Elizabeth (now Lizbeth) Webb.

On another occasion, a telephone call proved fruitful. "I am the mother of Dorothy Carless," said the caller. "I have another, younger daughter who sings, too. In fact, I think she probably has a better voice than her sister. I would be grateful if you would give her an audition."

"How old is she?" I asked.

"Just over fourteen."

"Fourteen!" I exclaimed. "Well, I can't believe that she has a better voice than Dorothy, but I'll certainly hear her."

I held the audition in the Criterion

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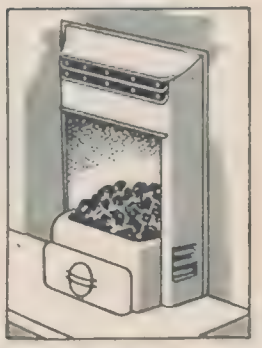

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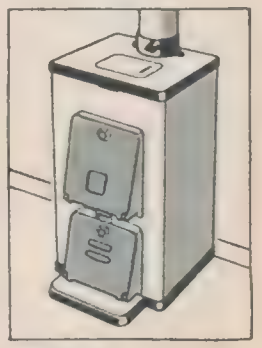

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Theatre in Piccadilly. I had a policy of never meeting a person before giving him or her an audition for a job on radio. I felt that I might be influenced by seeing when, after all, only hearing mattered. So, while I sat in the listening room, Miss Carless went straight up to the microphone and sang.

The voice was extraordinarily mature. The girl was singing with the meaning and sincerity of an experienced adult singer. Afterwards, I met her, a big, gawky kid who looked, except for her puppy fat, about eighteen.

"She's very good," I said to her mother. "She can start tomorrow." We agreed on a starting salary of (I think) £10 a week.

"What shall we do about her name?" I said. "We can't call her Carless. There'll be too much confusion with her sister. Let's call her Carr—Carole Carr."

We did.

Wanted Singer To Act

Once, it took another experienced West End artist to show me that one of my employees had more talent than I had noticed. It happened during the war, when I had a show at a cinema at London's Marble Arch. One afternoon, Frances Day, having just arrived by train at Paddington, impulsively got out of her taxi to see the show.

Afterwards, she telephoned me. "You have a fellow in the show who plays a guitar and sings," she said. "I am opening soon in Cole Porter's *Dubarry Was A Lady*, and I want him for the male lead."

"You must be mad," I said. "He can't act."

"If he can't, I'll soon make him," she said determinedly.

We negotiated a contract, and Bruce Trent, who had earned a steady £20 a week as a band vocalist, got a £55 rise and became a West End star.

At one London theatre, a bemedalled flight-sergeant pilot of the R.A.F. came to see me one day.

"I'm on convalescent leave," he said. "I've been suffering from flying fatigue after thirty-two raids on Germany. I sing a little, and I wondered if you would give me a hearing."

I could hardly refuse him; afterwards I was glad that I hadn't. He had a very good voice. I put him in the show and introduced him myself to the audience, giving details of his exploits in the air. His singing almost brought the house down.

Two or three weeks later, however, two men came backstage to see me and asked a lot of questions about my latest "discovery." When he arrived, they marched him away. He was a deserter and an impostor; he had been in the R.A.F. only three weeks. He went to jail, and I have not heard of him since.

After the war, I broke up my band and left the B.B.C. again. Now I could devote more time to my home and family. At our marriage in 1941, Peggy had been disappointed because time and pressure of work did not allow us to wed in a church. I had promised her that one day we would solemnize our marriage before the altar. The opportunity came now.

Got Married Quietly

"But what are all our friends going to say?" said Peggy. "And the neighbours, too. They're going to ask themselves what we've been doing these last six or seven years."

"But we can explain to them, tell them the truth," I said.

"We can't explain to *everyone*. Besides, some people wouldn't believe us."

"Well, can't we go to church and get married on the quiet?" I asked.

Peggy said she would have a word with the local clergyman. The outcome was that one dark evening, Peggy, myself and two trusted friends went secretly to the church to marry before God.

In 1946, I gave a job to a demobilized R.A.F. officer named Stanley Dale. He wanted to learn show business. I employed him at first as a talent scout, and he found Frankie Howerd for me. He dropped into the Stage Door Canteen one night when Frankie, who was on demobilization leave, had gatecrashed his way into a spot in the show.

Dale saw him afterwards and asked him what he was doing for a living.

"Nothing," said Howerd. "I can't get a job in show business. No agent will look at me, and Carroll Levis has turned me down twice."

Stanley invited him to come and see me. The first time he came to the office, he was so nervous and scatterbrained that he forgot his music. My manager arranged another audition. Frankie mumbled: "I don't really know if there's any point in my coming again. . . ."

However, he did keep the second appointment, and, in my absence, my manager offered him an engagement. For a trial, I put him in a concert I had arranged at an R.A.F. camp in Berkshire. He received a terrific ovation.

At the time I was about to send on tour a new show called *For The Fun Of It*, starring Donald Peers and Nosmo King. For one scene, I had bought from the B.B.C. the title of a radio programme called *They're Out*, which featured little-known ex-service-performers. In the *They're Out* spot in my show, I put a girl, Frankie Howerd and another unknown named Max Bygraves. I paid Howerd £15 a week.

It was at my suggestion that Frankie altered the spelling of his name from Howard to Howerd. "People will look at Howerd," I told him, "and think it's a mistake. They'll look at the name again, and remember it." In *For The Fun Of It*, Frankie's name was in small letters at the bottom of the bill, but somehow I felt in my bones that he was heading for the big time.

One night, I took Val Parnell to see Frankie in the show at the Finsbury Park Empire. Val, who always seems to be the butt for my successful prophecies, turned to me after Howerd had been on the stage for a couple of minutes and said: "Have you got this guy under contract?"

I nodded.

"If I were you, I should pay him off now," Val said. "I don't know whether the audience are laughing at him, with him, or because of him."

"I couldn't care less," I said, "as long as they're laughing. And just look at them—they're rolling in their seats. I'll tell you what I'll do, Val. I'll bet you a fiver that within twelve months this fellow will be back in this theatre with his name in lights."

Broke Theatre Records

As it happened, I would have lost the bet. Frankie Howerd did not go into the Finsbury Park Empire at the top of the bill and break all the theatre's records until a year and one week after Val and I saw him there.

In March, 1947, meanwhile, Howerd and I had signed a five-year contract under which I guaranteed him, for thirty-six weeks of every year, a salary starting at £20 a week and rising by £5 every six months. In those early days, I naturally gave Frankie a lot of professional advice.

He progressed so rapidly that within a year of signing the contract, I was sub-letting him to first-class theatres at £175 a week.

The financial terms in the contract were long since ignored and we halved the proceeds.

No Work For Bygraves

Though it might be said that my gamble with the newcomer, Frankie Howerd, paid off, the concurrent gamble with Max Bygraves failed—through my own folly.

When *For The Fun Of It* came off the halls, I could not find another spot for Max, and he, meanwhile, had financial and other worries, and he pestered me to find him work.

"Why can't I ever get to see Mr. Payne?" he complained to my secretary and my manager. I am afraid that I was fobbing him off. I could not see Bygraves going very far; I was much more interested in Howerd.

Eventually, I did see Max, and I told him that if he wanted to go round the agencies to find work, I would not hold him rigidly to the contract. Some time later, he came to see me.

"I know my act has been wrong in the past," he said, "but I've a better idea now. Could you book me somewhere, just to see my act?"

By this time, our contract had ended. I booked him for a week at the Grand, Brighton.

Instead of going to see him on the opening night, however, I did not get to Brighton until the Thursday. I saw Max after the show.

"The act's fine," I said. "Much, much better."

I already had an idea for him. Then he told me that a representative of another agency had seen him earlier in the week and got his signature to a contract. I had lost an artist who is today one of the biggest draws in show business.

Thirty-five years in the business have taught me many lessons. A small show with which I was associated recently, did shocking business in its first week. When I saw a performance, I realized that the whole thing had been badly produced. For three nights running, I kept the cast after the last house and rehearsed them until three and four in the morning. I was a bit hard on them, no doubt, but the alternative would have been ultimately to close the show. The artists co-operated sensibly, and we pulled the production into a profit-making shape.

I have found it essential to be a fairly hard taskmaster and at times to be quite ruthless.

All good artists are temperamental, and a producer of shows must handle them firmly.

More Shows To Produce

My fortunes have fluctuated in the last three years. Some of my shows have been successful, some not so successful. But ahead there are more years, more shows for me to produce and more talent to be found.

And now, to my complete astonishment, I find myself once again a broadcasting personality.

Right out of the blue, in September, 1953, Anna Instone, head of the B.B.C. Gramophone Department, called me to ask if I would like to become a disc jockey. Thus, my Sunday programme, *British Bandbox*, was born.

Then in March of last year, Kenneth Adam, the Light Programme Director, invited me to lunch at Broadcasting House and suggested that I do a programme called *Say It With Music*. Both shows have been highly successful.

My career has entered a new phase, and I am still looking forward. For some time to come, it looks as if I shall continue to say it with music. THE END

Consider your verdict

by

RUSSELL SCOTT, LL.B.

DRIVING his car to the office, Maxwell approached a road junction where there was a pedestrian crossing with traffic lights which were showing green, in his favour.

A taxi was halted by the kerb, so that it obscured part of the pedestrian crossing from Maxwell's view. Because of this, he could not see Mr. Jay, who was about to walk across the road.

Jay stepped out from behind the taxi, with the lights against him, almost under Maxwell's front wheels. Maxwell was driving slowly, but even so he knocked Jay down and injured him seriously.

When he came out of hospital, Jay sued Maxwell for negligence, claiming £700 damages. "It is a driver's legal duty to approach a pedestrian crossing at such a speed that he can stop, or avoid any pedestrian who may be on it," Jay told the judge in court.

"Maxwell should have been more careful, particularly as the taxi blocked his view so that he could not see the whole crossing."

"Jay was entirely to blame," Maxwell retorted indignantly. "He stepped out negligently from the shelter of the taxi and, without looking to the right, he crossed the road against a red light. He is lucky to be alive—if I had not been driving slowly he would not be here today.

"Surely a court will not award damages to someone who has risked his life so stupidly. The responsibility for Jay's injuries is entirely his own."

What is your verdict? For the judge's decision, turn to page 54

More people get relief with RENNIES than with any other INDIGESTION tablet

There is one simple explanation of the predominance of RENNIES: they "suit" the vast majority of indigestion conditions.

From the moment you start to suck a Rennie tablet, the antacid ingredients begin to work. As these ingredients are carried to the stomach gradually, in your own saliva, the digestive balance is restored quickly but naturally.

There are probably two other contributory reasons for the wide use of Rennies. The first is that they are pleasant to the palate; and the second is that they are economical. There are packets at 2/8d., 1/6d., and 9½d., and even a trial size of ten tablets which costs only 4d.

OH, JOHNNY! *by TIM*

ARNOLD LUCAS BOOSTS HIS SALES

Continued from page 27

of plaster round each wrist, for they have found that it prevents chafing by the inner sleeves of their oilskins.

"The fact that the thin covering protects the human skin, but at the same time allows normal feeling through it, has led to the use of the bandage in such jobs as biscuit-making," says Lucas. "The girls continually have to slide hot broken biscuits off the line without harming their fingers." It is also used by the blind in their trades, to protect their finger-tips for their sensitive task of reading Braille.

Lucas considers that his wartime development of the bandages was one of the most worthwhile jobs that he ever tackled.

Before the second World War, an eminent specialist who had dealt with thousands of casualties warned the British authorities that they would probably have to deal with a large proportion of soft-tissue injuries. At that time, it was the practice to bind the casualty in plaster of paris strips, but the specialist believed that if plaster of paris could be pre-shaped, it would do the job better. The technical difficulties appeared insuperable, and Lucas was consulted.

Jackets Saved Lives

"When I arrived home after hearing of the problem" he says, "I got down on the dining-room floor with some sheets of paper and a pair of scissors, and cut out six or seven paper patterns which I estimated could cope with the injuries of any man, whatever size he happened to be." The patterns were then cut out of pieces of specially treated cloth, and finally turned into the "plaster-jackets" that helped to save many lives.

Throughout the war, Lucas lectured to the services, explaining the best ways of using elastic adhesive bandages.

Early in June, 1944, he was demonstrating to an airborne division which was concentrated in East Anglia. "I suddenly found that there was an iron ring round the camp," he says. "I was there for three days, unable to let anyone know what had happened to me until after D-Day."

Throughout the early part of the war, one problem puzzled Lucas and other directors of his firm. Although the services had adequate first aid kit, thousands of tins of dressings were sent to men in the forces by wives, sweethearts and sisters. "It was quite a while before we knew why the troops asked for them," says Lucas. "They weren't interested in the bandages; the tin was watertight—and it just took twenty cigarettes.

"After the war we had another tin problem," he says. "Due to metal restrictions, the pocket-sized tins of dressings were 'utility packs,' and the metal sides of the tins had knife-sharp edges. There were bitter letters of complaint." One housewife wrote telling him that the company was feathering its nest by specially designing the tins. "You make sure that everyone will cut themselves badly enough to need a plaster," she wrote.

Made Goggles On Everest

Many hundreds of feet of the standard bandage, specially sealed against low temperatures, were supplied to the Everest team in 1953, while a special form of "high altitude" tape was developed for Tom Stobart, the expedition's photographer. This was used to seal the biscuit tins in which the expedition's film was carried. Inside each tin was a polythene bag, also tape-sealed, which held the actual film.

"As soon as the expedition had started," Stobart said later, "I realized that I was the only person who had any tape of this kind, and it was used for all sorts of jobs. On one occasion, an unexpected snowfall revealed that the porters who were carrying our gear had no snow goggles, and after one day many of them were showing the first signs of snow blindness. Using the high altitude tape and spare celluloid, we finally made about thirty pairs of improvised goggles."

Later, he says, the tape was used to patch clothes and tents, to bind round the metal handles of cameras which were too cold to touch, and even to mend the oxygen equipment used by Hillary and Tenzing. The Sherpa women who helped to carry the loads to the base camp had another use for the tape.

Many of them suffered from headaches due to the high altitude, and they firmly believed that small patches of the tape, stuck on each temple, would cure the trouble and prevent its recurrence. THE END

Consider your verdict

IN the case on page 53, the judge said that a driver has a legal duty to approach a pedestrian crossing at such a speed that he can stop if there is anyone on it. Although Maxwell had been unable to see Jay because of the taxi, Jay was on the crossing and Maxwell should have been able to pull up in time. He could not do so, and was guilty of negligence. Jay, however, had been equally negligent in crossing against the lights, so the judge ordered Maxwell to pay him only £350 damages. (*This is the probable verdict, based on actual cases.*)

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RESULTS OF "FITTING PHRASES" COMPETITIONS

John Bull

December 25, 1954

SECTION 1.

Best entries were those bearing phrases allocated thus:

A5, B1, C3, D4, E8, F7, G2, H6

For these entries 42 readers share the prize of £50.

SECTION 2.

Best entries were those bearing phrases allocated thus:

A3, B6, C1, D7, E8, F4, G2, H5

For these entries 15 readers share the prize of £50.

FULL LIST OF NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF THE WINNERS CAN BE SEEN AT "JOHN BULL" OFFICES, 96 LONG ACRE, LONDON, W.C.2. ALL WINNERS HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED AND CHEQUES HAVE BEEN DISPATCHED.

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The *Bullets* Championship is but one of many interesting extras in "*Bullets*" *Bulletin*, a weekly paper with help for would-be winners. A free introductory supply can be yours with that Presentation Coupon below. With it you are invited to enclose your *Bullets* for this week's £500 cheque plus £100 "Shopping Challenge," heading prizes value over £1,000. You may be next to pocket £500 and try your hand at spending an extra £100 in sixty minutes.

"BULLETS" PRIZES VALUE OVER £1,000 THIS WEEK!

Chief Winners No. 1,970

FIRST PRIZE, £750 plus Three Wishes and Weekend: Mrs. A .S. Foulds, 1 Ashfield Cottages, Bingley, Yorkshire:

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£50: R. C. Readett, 60 Danford Lane, Solihull, Birmingham: TAXATION'S MEDICINE—BRINGING INDUSTRY'S *Tempo* DOWN.

£25: Mrs. J. Somerville, 53 Durham Road, Portobello: GIVING THEMSELVES — *Living* MEMORIALS, BLOOD DONORS.

OTHER AWARDS. £15: Mrs. H. Davie, 19 Woodlands, Golders Green, N.W.11: DOING A BIT OF FIGURING—MILLIONS, SINCE "NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR." £10: J. E. Harries, 196 Richmond Road, Abertillery: THE WORLD'S BEST—ERA, SURE—UNLESS "ERASURE"—. £5: D. Bell, 62 Kensington Road, Knock, Belfast: DOING A BIT OF CROONING —IVAN—"SHOW" OR "BUSINESS"? £5: J. B. Claxton, 497 Nuthall Road, Nottingham: MR. DILLYDALLY ARRIVED AND — EXCLAIMED, "A PRETTY KETTLE—!" £5: W. C. Flint, 16 Murray Road, Rugby: INTO THE FLAMES—*We* GAZED—*I* STARE. £5: G. Grimshaw, Park Mount, Butternab Road, Beaumont Park, Huddersfield: AT OUR DOG SHOW — TOWZER — UNCLASSIFIED, UNINVITED, *Undefeated*! £5: W. F. Hayward, 46 Robert Street, Plumstead, S.E.18: DUEL AT DAWN—AND *Pneumonia* KILLED BOTH!

For ten winners of £2 10s., see "*Bullets*" *Bulletin*. 50 Prizes of 10s. and 1,500 "Good Shot" Prizes have also been posted.

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OTHER AWARDS: £25, £10, £9, £8, £7, £6, 3 of £5, 10 of £2.10s., 50 of 10s.

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SURREY FOWLS as BONUSES —see details on coupon

THIS WAY TO THE PRIZE-LIST

To make a *Bullet*, add simply TWO, THREE or FOUR words of apt and original comment to any of the *Examples* below. To use an incomplete *Example*, first complete it with any one word in place of dotted line—then make your *Bullet* as usual.

Britain's Target	Defeated
More Civilized	Bitter Experience
Sunshine Of Prosperity	Money Flies When
Listen To Graham And	Shopping Today
For A Quiet Life	Joints, Steaks, Chops
On The Road To Fame	Couldn't Get On
Nobody Wants	All Sweetness And Light
The Little Fellow	Advice From An Expert
Anxious To Please	Singing
Idol Of The Crowd	In The Guard's Van

Incomplete "Examples"—see instructions

The..... Brigade	Robbed Of Her.....
Wanted It....., So	When Grandpa Went To...
Those Empty.....	.....For The Motorist

RULES 1. First Prize for best *Bullet* received. Others in order of merit; the test is of cleverness, aptness and originality.

2. Editor undertakes that all *Bullets* received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent Adjudicators.

3. As entry-fee enclose P.O. as indicated. Fee submitted will be taken to cover *Bullets* in coupon order—any sent in excess will be disqualified. Plain-paper entries are allowed. Make P.O. payable to JOHN BULL, cross /& Co./, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated. Forces half-rate for *Bullets* for entry-fees not exceeding 2s. if coupons personally completed and Service rank indicated.

4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that result of this Contest (in "*Bullets*" *Bulletin* dated March 12 and in JOHN BULL dated March 19), also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding. Odhams' employees (and families) ineligible.

(See "Daily Herald" on Saturday, March 5, for early news of *Bullets* No. 1,975 result.)

EXAMPLE ..... |6d.

BULLET

EX. ..... |6d.

B

EX. ..... |6d.

B

EX. ..... |6d.

B.

EX. ..... |6d.

B.

SURREY FOWLS A fine roasting fowl accompanies each of the 20 chief prizes won with *Bullet* which was one of five or more on single coupon or plain-paper entry sheet.

1,975

Closing Postmark MONDAY, FEB. 21

I agree to Rules and enclose P.O.

Signed.....

Address.....

Value .....

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